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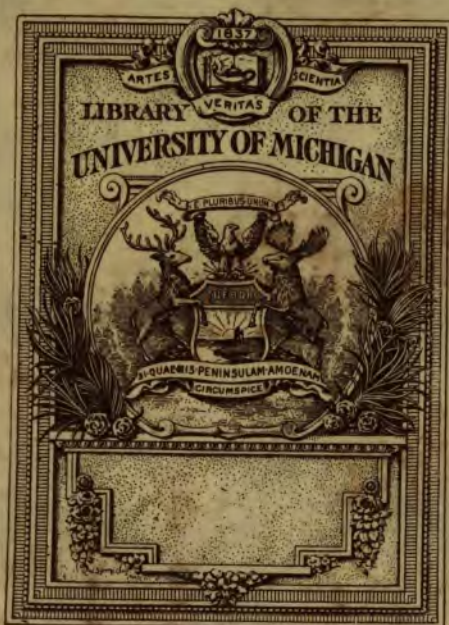
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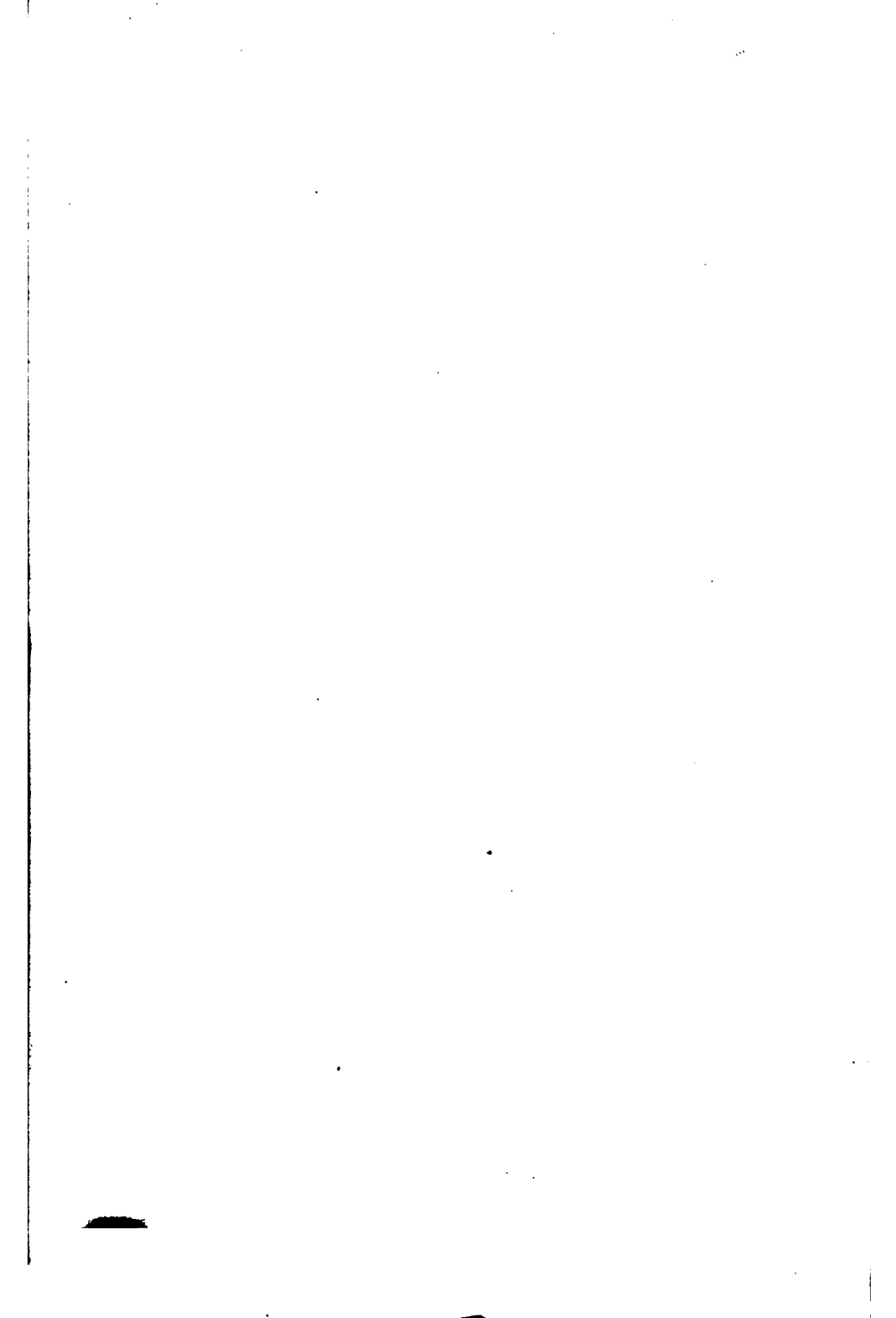
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JULIUS CÆSAR

AN

HISTORICAL TRAGEDY

IN FIVE ACTS

BY

EDWARD WILLARD

HORACE WILLARD
144 SOUTH SIXTH STREET
PHILADELPHIA

1890.

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13 11.10.1860

DEDICATION.

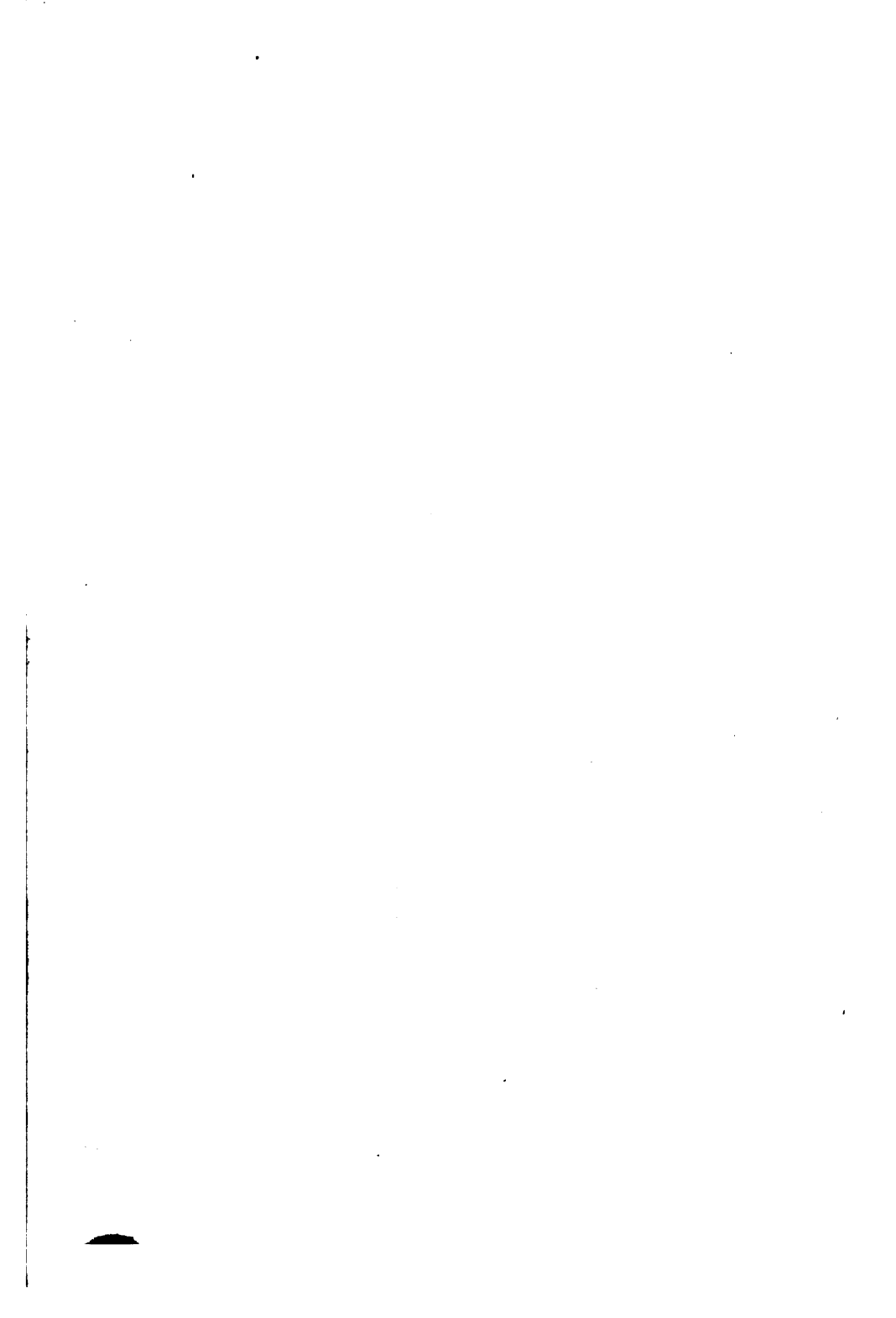
TO THE HONORED MEMORY OF MY LATE WIFE,

ESTHER MARY WILLARD,—

WHO BORE WITH ME IN TEMPER AND SPIRIT,
CHEERED ME IN SICKNESS AND ADVERSITY, AND
EVER-CHERISHED ME IN LOVE AND KINDNESS,—

THIS WORK IS AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED,

BY THE AUTHOR.



PREFACE.

THE unsparing, yet impartial hand of time, will, with unerring certainty and precision, duly fit and apportion this work's true standard of literary excellence.

The theme chosen for this play, was selected by the author on account of its undying historical interest, as well as on account of the many opportunities, its incidents afford, for situations of rare dramatic power.

So, speed my bark upon the waters. It may return to me o'er-freighted with care and calumny, envy and misconstruction; or, it may be that heaven's balmiest zephyrs will waft it upon seas of such pure and happy distention, that their every ripple will purl in sweet contentment to my heart. Yet, be that as it may, no man dares question its honest, earnest course, or that it is freighted with the noblest aspirations for the good of men, and with such illustrations of precept and example as will tend to culture, strengthen, and support our weak humanity on earth.

THE AUTHOR.

PHILADELPHIA, October 4, A.D. 1890.



DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

JULIUS CÆSAR, Dictator and Imperator of Rome.

JUNIUS BRUTUS, prætor of Rome, and senator.

MARK ANTONY, master of horse to Cæsar.

CASSIUS, a senator.

P. SERVILIUS CASCA, tribune of the plebeians, and senator.

OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, nephew and heir of Cæsar.

TREBONIUS, ex-consul, and senator.

LEPIDUS, master of horse to Octavius Cæsar.

DENTATUS,	}	senators.
CIMBER,		
DECIMUS,		

CLITO,	}	merchants.
SYLLA,		

LEONTI, a page.

COBBLER.

BEPPPO, a drunkard.

ICILIUS, captain of Cæsar's guard.

IRENÆUS, aid to Antony.

ANSELMO, servant to Casca.

STEWARD to Casca.

GIUSEPPE ARNO, a spy.

CALPHURNIA, wife of Cæsar.

PORTIA, wife of Brutus.

THE NAZARENE, a prophetess.

LADY MINSTREL.

Senators, priests, soothsayers, soldiers, citizens, petitioners,
plebeians, and attendants.



JULIUS CÆSAR.

ACT I.

SCENE I.

A street in Rome. Tiber in the distance.

Enter CLITO and SYLLA, meeting.

Sylla. A friendly greeting to thee, brother Clito !
Men court no trade upon this festal day,
And I have closed my shop and hither strolled,
To shun the noise and tumult of the streets.

Clito. We had a thought in common then, my friend.
'Tis not too often awkward chance doth place
Congenial spirits face to face, and I
Give thee most hearty greeting.

Sylla. I feel I need
The sympathetic pressure of thy hand.
What means this lethargy of idle peace ?
This dearth of business, interest, and of thrift ?

Clito. It is the curse
Of our aggressive wars. We have no peace,
Save in the nature of respite from war ;

And in that fevered interval of rest,
In wild carousal and high revelry,
The sacred trust of reason is defiled.

Sylla. My senior brother, thou art ripe in years,
Experience, and wisdom : tell me, then,
The points of contrast in the peace that was
To what we now endure.

Clito. There was a time when, after glorious war,
There came a hallowed rest of blissful peace.
Then industry assured the joys of home,
And from the sloping hills the vintner's song
Trilled its sweet melody ; and from the fields
The song and jest that lighten labor ran ;
While mellowed tones of lowing cattle, blent
With fragrant odors of the field and wood,
And all the airy hum of glowing life,
Becalmed the wearied heart and soothed the sense
With nature's ecstasy of happy rest.
Peace, plenty, happiness,—that trio blessed,—
Nestled on every hearth. The peasant sat,
When time had tolled the hours of his toil,
In sweet contentment at his cottage-door ;
While doting wife and children, open-eyed,
Drank in the stirring tales of camp and field.

Sylla. Alas ! in all my conscious years
I've never known such happiness as that !

Clito. Yet now
The busy hum of industry is stilled.

The ringing anvil and a clanging stroke
Of labor's artifice are heard no more,
While men who fattened on their country's woe,
Whose only fears were that the war would cease,
Shame honest effort with their flaunting wealth.
Men waste their time in idleness and sin.
Truant to virtue, women shun their homes,
And stray in paths of vice, bedecked in all
The tinselled tawdriness of lewd device.
Thus public morals with our virtues die,
Corruption pulses in our nation's blood,
And each new sun but breeds a weightier sin.

Sylla. And may I ask,
Can all the spoils and trophies, Cæsar culls
From barbarous nations round us, compensate
For dearth of product here?

Clito. Oh, be assured, they cannot! there may be
Much worse affliction still in store for us.
If chaos reigns in business still, my friend,
A fortnight hence, we will repack our wares,
And hie us to our factors; there we'll bide
A better time and market.

Sylla. Thy counsel doth command me: as there's
 naught
For us to do, we will enjoy the sights,
And see our Cæsar in the pomp of state.

[*Exeunt.*

Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, *and* TREBONIUS.

Brutus. I always thought, when honest conscience
wrought

Conviction to our minds, as of a wrong
Committed, or a duty left undone,
Its promptings e'er would breed a direct sense
Of that wherein our erring nature sinned.
And can you, then, in your experience, give
The warranty of fact to this?

Trebonius. We can, good Brutus!
Whate'er of conscience ever troubled us
Hath acted in that wise.

Cassius. Dear Brutus,
Why should thy mind be charged with any cares?
Peace, happiness, and wealth abide with thee.

Brutus. Then let me, brothers both, confess to you
That for some two months past I have endured
Distemper of my spirit, and my soul
Hath drooped beneath a load of brooding thought,
And day and night I bear the load, nor know
Its method, manner, nor the reason for it.
I lead an honest life, and wrong no man;
And from my bounteous store I ever seek
To break the stress of poverty, and soothe
Disaster and affliction where I may.
And ere I lay me down to fevered rest,

I hope and trust and pray, that gracious sleep
May with its balm divert this nameless care.
Yet, when the glow of morning greets my sight,
My ever-brooding conscience still puts on
The dreary burden of another day.

Trebonius. This is a phase of mental woe that I
Have never known nor heard of. Loving care,
And kind solicitude and cheerful company,
Must drive this leprous devil forth!

Cassius. Oh, noble brother!
No man in Rome hath more respect than thou.
Thy honor is untarnished as the sun.
Thy statesmanship and loyalty are such,
That younger statesmen strive to emulate
Thy learned wisdom and thy virtuous life.
Thou art the Prætor of all Rome, and thou
Art still a Senator, whose voice and reason
Attemper the discretion of the state.
Then may not herein lie thy strange unrest?
Is there a public duty unfulfilled?
Oh, my beloved Brutus, there are men,
So poor and humble that they can but pray
The right may be their boon. Oh, give them heed!
Oh, soften still thy pity! let thy heart's
Unfathomed charity probe deeper still,
That thou canst feel the world's abuse of man,
Weep with his woe and share his every grief,
Protect and cherish him and right his wrong.

And then the grace of peace may flood thy heart,
And cheer thee evermore.

Brutus. Thine is the hand to smite the rock, and
let

The fount of living waters gush to light !
I feel the truth that doth refresh the soul,
And nerves the pulse to healthful life.

Trebonius. Why, hither comes the caustic, valorous
Casca !

He glares on vacancy, and yet his sight
Drinks in the form and spirit of the scene,
While inward comments quiver to his lips
As if he spoke unto himself.

Brutus. He hath a complex nature, for in him
Spleen, wit, and satire are so strangely mixed,
His pure affections, even, have the guise
Of soft badinage.

Cassius. He is a brilliant satirist, and, if
We lure his wit sarcastic to expend
Its barbed arrows on some chosen theme,
Our labor will meet rich requital.

Enter CASCA.

Casca. Hail, brother Senators, I greet you all !
I fear the showman's hands are out of gear,
His puppets stroll at random. Why, Brutus,
My gentle friend, I missed thee for a week.

Cassius. Why call you Brutus gentle, honest
Casca?

Casca. It is inherent in his studious habit :
He hath the philosophic vein, and, if
An earthquake came, he'd time it with the glass.

Brutus. This kindly stricture doth remind me
now,—

Some scribe hath sent me curt and pithy scrolls,
And here is one, was freighted with a stone
And thrown into my study. Read it, Cassius.

Cassius. "Oh, noble Brutus, you are wise and
good!

And reap the honors of a blessed life.
And yet, bethink thee of thy fellow-man
Who groans and sweats beneath oppression's yoke,
And wrings his shackles with unheeded woe!"

Trebonius. This is uncharitable and unwarranted.
Our noble Brutus never failed to right
All wrong within his sphere.

Cassius. Alas! the purport of that missive smites
At every conscience here.

[*Cheers without.*

This is a happy holiday for fools!
Our august Cæsar will attend the games.

Trebonius. And he will walk there with his trusty
guard,

And hold some converse with the lowly poor.

Brutus. He must appease them, for in their estate

The spirit of unrest is ever rife.
And, furthermore, we know these swarming hordes
Throng to his legions and make food for war.

Casca. He hath displayed much vanity of late.
He is as gingerly as an ancient maid :
Like many a spinster, hides a selfish wish
With simple, artless protestation,—so,
He coveted a laurel crown, and, when
It was awarded him, he wore it too,
As if in recognition of the gift,
And yet the wish and crown were both contrived
To hide the baldness of his head.

Cassius. Adornment is the satellite of pride.
'Tis said the Indian gem that clasps his cloak
Is worth a monarch's ransom.

Brutus. He hath a prouder mien, I will admit,
That chills all courtesy ; I know his pride
Hath stung me oft, and yet he always said
He cherished me in love.

Cassius. So there are beasts of prey,
Cherish their young and eat them !

Casca. Our laggard friends wend hither now, at
last.

Enter DENTATUS, CIMBER, and DECIMUS.

Good-morrow, loyal friends, we wish you all
The ripest honors of the day.

Dentatus. We were delayed in our appointment
here,
By swaying crowds that jammed us in the streets.
It would disgust an open-hearted beggar,
To see the flatterers and sycophants,
And all the baser tribes of politicians,
That hem the paths the Cæsar will traverse.

Casca. No scheme too vile, no worldly art too
mean,
To help and serve the politic use of men
Who cringe and crawl and squirm, and lick the hand
Of him who holds the key to power and place.

Brutus. Now, brother Casca, thou art in the vein,
The terse and salient sallies of thy humor
Should in the glow of speech present to us,
The baser politician as he lives!

Cassius. The kindling eye informs us that his
thoughts,
Will not unspoken die. Yield to the spirit!
Let the mind's picture live!

Casca. The cunning, plotting politician,—ha!
Oh, what a complex animal is he!
He cheers with those within, hoots those without.
He never pays his honest debts, and yet
As bailiff would he hound his fellow-man.
The public coffers are his assets, and
He guards the pile with zealous, watchful care,
And never wastes a groat—that he can steal.

Self-interest is his only god and creed.
And when he gains his pinnacle of place,
He shuns the friends who helped him there, because
The world must think the bladder of his power
Was swelled by merit only. Yet he feels
His utter nothingness of self when, with
Fate's cruel stroke, it shrinks to vacant air!
Frugal in virtue, prodigal in sin,
Religion hath he none; and yet he prays,
But prays in sight of men. His only joys
Are plunder, wine and lust,—and all his fears,
The loss of office and the dread of work!

Brutus. Well cut and rounded by a master hand,
That carves the naked truth with rare precision.

Dentatus. And, furthermore, we saw the motley
mass

Of citizens *en route* to reach the games,
Who will present a crown to Cæsar there.
Poor Antony was marching at the head,
And tried to time them to a martial step:
But they walked on him, and, in mute despair,
He dropped his gait, and slouched on with the rest.
So ere the day is closed we'll have a king.

Cassius. Nay, we will not!
For, trust me, Cæsar will refuse the crown.

All. Refuse the crown?

Cassius. He will refuse it.
Not from the modesty of self-denial,

Nor from the conscious lack of his deserts.
He will refuse it, as a peevish boy
Declines a proffered toy, because he knows
'Tis his, but for the grasping. We all know
Fixed power hath limitation, as becomes
Enduring monarchy. He sets no limit
Unto his powers and will brook no rule,
And to the use of his ambition, moulds
A pliant world at will.

Brutus. And yet, my friends,
'Tis not a crime that Cæsar is ambitious.
This is an age when all men would excel,
And in the pausing of a simple breath
A man outstrips his fellow.

Cassius. Yet man's ambitions, like his aims and acts,
Should be subservient to private rights,
And wreak no public evil.

Casca. I pray you all remember, my good friends,
That you are pledged to dine with me to-day.
I have a toothsome cook,—who's testy, too,
An autocrat more absolute than Cæsar.
He will apportion vengeance to our dishes
If we delay him sore.

Brutus. Pray give us a few moments' grace, my
friend.

There is some undercurrent drifting here
Beneath the outward seeming of your speech.
It is a stream I dare not ford, for so

Intrinsically selfish is weak man
That, working out his noblest acts, he is
So in the leaven of pure self inwrought,
He shuts out other men, and earns alone
The fullest meed of glory and renown,
That crowns a noble work. It seems you three,
Together have the bark of purpose launched,
Upon the current of one common thought;
And in a fog of doubt I'm left to stand,
On the receding shore, as you sail on,
Set in the cold wind of pure selfishness,
Unmindful, that with each impelling breath,
You strain the tension of the cutting wrong
That wounds the friendly heart.
Have I no certain weight to freight our craft?
But show to me the chart of your design,
Point out to me the port of your intent;
If conscience waft your bark, and honor steer it,
I'll sail my prow with thine through wreck and storm,
And, if disaster overwhelm thee, I'll e'en nail
Our flag to the mast-head alone, and bear
The brunt of all to come.

Cassius. Oh, well and fitly spoken, noble Brutus!
Yet our delay was but our tribute to
Thy ripe, matured experience, and we
Could not present to thy observant eye
The merest skeleton of our intent.
But now our purpose is full grown, and we

Invite your honored, brave and loyal hand,
To strike with ours in a common cause.

Brutus. I feel your business is of grave import,
And thus we need the time and place for free
Discussion and deliberation cool.
Why not, good friends, then visit me at home?
Come in the broad and open light of day,
Without disguise, concealment, or excuse.
As Rome is full of spies, this course, I feel,
Will most allay suspicion and mistrust.
And then our minds can have the fullest rein
In honest privacy of thought.

Trebonius. Our hearts leap to your offer, and it
seems

A blessing to our cause, that we may meet
Beneath the roof-tree of Rome's cherished son,
And there adjust and frame, the noble themes,
That light our soul's resolve.

Brutus. My loving friends, your welcome is as full
As boundless ocean's truest depths; and there,
Upon the sacred hearth of hospitality,
The fires of purest friendship ever burn.
And, in their cheery light, fraternal hands
In cordial, hearty grasp can set our hearts
Aglow with honor, conscience, and the right,
And in the fulness of your duties' scope,
Consult together. So, farewell, my friends,
And visit me anon!

SCENE II.

*Street in Rome. Cobbler at work at stall on the right.
Groups of Citizens and Plebeians. BEPPO re-
clining on a bench.*

First Cit. And is it true
That Cæsar will be crowned a king to-day?

Second Cit. It is most true.
I hear the deputation's now in train
And headed by Mark Antony.

First Cit. Our friend Mark Antony is a true
soldier.
Parades and shows and marshalling of men,
Give him most keen delight.

Second Cit. See! hither come some senators.
They bristle with the dignity of state.
Let's give them bounteous scope, and stand aside.
[Citizens retire to back of stage.]

Enter CIMBER and DENTATUS.

Cimber. Why, what a wondrous artisan is this,
Who works upon a holiday?

Dentatus. This is the learned cobbler,
Who studied Greek whilst he was cobbling shoes.

Cimber. Indeed! Then I would
Trust neither to his cobbling nor his Greek.

For application, half absorbed, doth lack
The grip of thorough verity.
Tell us, why are the hours of this day,
With labor rife to thee?

Cobbler. A well-bred cock crows when he's had
his corn!

I work that I may live : my busy hands
Pay constant tribute to my stomach.

Dentatus. But know you not that Cæsar wends this
way?

Cobbler. And may his walk, become his gait,
And his gait become his walk.

Kimber. But you should show him honor and
respect.

Cobbler. I honor Cæsar, yet I cannot grade
My hours to my manners,—necessity
Rules both my time and me!

Dentatus. Such apt rejoinder merits quick reward.
Here is some coin : use it discreetly.

Cobbler. Oh, many thanks, my noble sir,
And may good health and generosity
Keep even pace with thee.

Kimber. And do not treat it as a mere gratuity,
Disburse it as a pittance wrung from toil.
Yet, by thine eye, I think that you prefer
The coin to all our counsel.

Cobbler. Oh, I prefer the coin ; too many men
Who give sage counsel to the poor, forget

The stomach is the furnace of the spirit,
And daily food the fuel of our life.

Dentatus. Oh, Cimber!

Ha! ha! ha! Outwitted by a cobbler!
Trust neither to his learning nor his Greek!
But trust his wit, and he'll undo thee sore.

Cobbler. Now, our friend Beppo here—he can
bestow

His time on anything he likes.

He hath a nature takes in holidays,

As children suck an orange. Beppo! Beppo!

He is a fickle son of Bacchus, and

He hath no steadiness but for his vice.

Cimber. He hath a comet nose without a tail.

Dentatus. Alack! the tail is drowned.

Cimber. It is a beacon-light, by nature set
To warn us from the shoals of dissipation.

Beppo. [*Feeling his nose.*] It's only a-fevered, sirs,
and lacks moisture.

Perhaps it were the better for a wetting!

Dentatus. Why, know you not that at high noon
to-day,

Cæsar hath ordered all the founts of Rome
Shall flow with Tuscan wine?

Beppo. What! Oh, glorious Cæsar!
What time is it? where's a dial?

[*To Plebeians.*

Now, come with me, ye happy, sportive birds,

And let us drain a dozen bumpers to
The health of august Cæsar!

[*Exeunt* BEPPO and Plebeians.]

Cobbler. Well, I'll not be a spot upon the moon!
Thanks to your bounty, I can stop my work,
And in the glowing humors of the day
I'll melt all current cares. [Exit Cobbler.]

[*Approaching music heard.*]

Dentatus. I hear the Cæsar coming. We cannot
share
The sickening adulation of the crowd,
Nor by our tacit presence even, lend
Approval to this act of Antony.

[*Exeunt* DENTATUS and CIMBER.]

Enter CÆSAR, with ICILIUS, Scribe, Guards, and
Attendants.

Icilius. There's a swarming crowd in yonder street
Rushing towards the games. We will pause here
And wait until they pass.

Cæsar. [To Scribe.] Give me those papers.
I will consider them whilst we stand here.

[*Looks over the papers.*]

If kindly-meaning, sympathetic men
Gave timely help and counsel to the needs
Of weak and erring brethren, they might save
The time they waste in fruitless supplication,
Begging of Justice to unseat herself.

Had I the weakness which these suits imply,
A mind so wearing with each idle plea,
I never had been Cæsar.
And, now the drifting crowds are spent, Icilius,
We may press on !

*A Soothsayer stands behind his altar facing CÆSAR,
and is manipulating with his fingers the smoke of a
fire on his altar, as if engaged in some divination.*

Soothsayer. Cæsar ! Cæsar ! O Cæsar !

Cæsar. Thou split-voiced coot !

Why rend my name with such a piteous screech,
Upon the startled air ? Be brief, or else
Hinge thy occasion to some fitter time :
What wouldst thou ?

Soothsayer. Beware the ides of March !

Cæsar. And why ? Rome is at peace,
My friends are trusty, my condition good.

Soothsayer. Beware the ides of March !

Cæsar. Thou woe-presaging owl, I fear thee not !
Watch him, Icilius, for crafty men
Oft prophesy their wishes, and incite
Such trains of thought as serve their evil ends.
And, when the ides of March are past and gone,
Bring him before me, and, if circumstance
Hath not wrought in his favor, woe to him.
Now let us on.
Calphurnia awaits us at the games,

By our appointment; and it has been said,
When Cæsar sets the dial-hand of time,
No laggard will distract its current stroke.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

The Feast of Lupercal. CÆSAR with CALPHURNIA seated, surrounded by throngs of Courtiers, Soldiers, etc.

Antony. Oh, most illustrious and puissant Cæsar!
The proud and august Commonwealth of Rome,
Begs thy acceptance of this kingly crown.
It is our tribute to thy royal worth.—
That from thy loins may spring a line of kings,
Greater than any monarchs of the earth,
And whose inherent valor will insure,
Perpetuate and guard our honored state,
In all the power and glory gained by thee.

Cæsar. And I decline it!
I'll not be founder of a line of kings.
The first who did his selfish carcass thrust
In power's highest place. I stand here now,
As head and front among you all, because
Of merit only, and I seek no crown.

Antony. And yet, great Cæsar, let me once again,
Beg thy acceptance of the crown.

Cæsar. And I say nay!
I wear a laurel crown, accorded me

Upon the merits of my life's full work.
I would not give a single leaf of that,
For all the crowns e'er graced the kings of earth.

Antony. And for the third time, then, I proffer it!
For those behind me urge me, to press on,
Until thy better nature leads thy mind
To take this proffer of our grateful love.

Cæsar. Why, Antony,
Hath stubborn humor dazed thy sterling sense?
Or wouldst thou, then, convince some sceptic ass,
That Cæsar hath no thirst for regal state?
Now for my last, best reason, once for aye!
No ruler should be thus assured of power.
For power's abuse and tyrannous misrule,
Exhaust the tolerance of loyal men.
And if such need arose, between us here,—
Ay, if the halo of my glory waned
By but a jot,—I would step down from power
And hail the radiance of the rising sun.

Antony. The nobleness of nature
Hath wrought for thee a crown, so rich and rare
In jewels of the mind and heart and soul,
That, as the sun the moon, it doth outflame
The glow and halo of material state.
Retire then, my friends, in pure content,
And thank the gods your proffer hath evoked
Such words of wise fidelity to Rome.

[*Deputation retires.*]

Whence got the fool, then, e'en the grovelling
thought

With which he would belie creation's work ?

Good Antony, an atheist is a worm,

That crawls upon the surface of the earth,

Denying its support.

And of the casuist Cimber ? I have heard

He is with learning rife.

Antony. He is a moralist, and spreads his homi-
lies,

Like snares to catch his game, poor fellow-man.

Cæsar. Of all men, I

Despise a moralist who is insincere,

Nor points his teaching with example prone ;

For, like the specialist who inculcates

Abstinence from drink, and eats himself to death,

His shafts are all of aimless force, because

His arrows should strike home.

And is it true of wealthy Casca, he

Is of an avaricious, sordid nature ?

Antony. A man of rare contrarities ! although
His courage is unselfish as the sun ;

He hath a palm that can o'erarch the coin,

And shield it, tenderly, from generous use.

Cæsar. I can bestow no confidence on him ;

And in the apprehension of my thought,

This Casca hath a twin. I like not Cassius :

He is malevolent and malicious too,

And, though he only treads his span of earth
In due routine of work, his evil mind
Can nurse its wrath, and brood in malice, to
Enhance the venom of his hate.
Pray tell me now—I should have asked before—
Who is yon woman standing there apart,
So weird of aspect and so mild of mien,
So dignified in stately unconcern?
Note, Antony, the spirit of her glance,—
Steady, unflinching, honest as the day!

Antony. I know her, Cæsar, for I've marked her
well.

She is a Nazarene from Palestine.
'Tis said she came from out the forest depths.
None know her here in Rome. I thought her first
Some crazed enthusiast in her visions wrapt.
She glides the streets like one in dreams entranced.
She wanders here and there, but mostly seeks
The poor and lowly, and she shares their griefs.
All women love her, and the children weep
When she must leave them. She asks for naught,
But feels and knows her needs will come to her,
Like dews of heaven to the thirsting earth.
She will receive no coin,—considers gold,
A shackle that would fetter her to earth.
She scatters blessings round her where she moves.
All hearts seem touched to give her kindly care.
She kneels in silent prayer beside the sick,

And then her soul irradiates her face
In lustrous beauty. It would seem as if
Some wondrous Power—not of evil—rules
Her every act and thought.

Calphurnia. Such creatures are of Heaven sent,
to soothe
The trials and sorrows of our burdened lives.

Antony. Pray, Cæsar, mark her now! She stands
in dreams,
And seems enwrapped in the lethargic folds
Of spiritual mystery.

Calphurnia. She has not looked this way, and yet
my heart
Warms to her with a pitying love!
And now she gazes on us. See that look!
The blaze of longing in her lustrous eyes!

Cæsar. She may have aught to say or ask of us.
[To Guard.
So bring her hither then! let her approach.

[*As the Guard approaches her, a group of
Soothsayers and Priests make hostile
demonstrations towards her.*
And woe to him who blocks her passage here,
Or mars her freest speech!

[*Guard would lead her, but she motions him
aside, and approaches alone.*
Calphurnia. See how she walks! The grandest
queen on earth

W. H. O. U.

Hath never such a gait. So nature can outstrip
All studied art and grace.

Cæsar. If you have aught to say, or ask of us,
Speak freely and without restraint or fear.
Moved by thy kind and gentle face, I swear
The winds of heaven have no freer scope
Than I accord thee here. Patient courtesy
And high respect shall on thy wishes wait,
And pay due homage to thy speech.

Nazarene. Great Cæsar, thou
Mightiest of men, in valor and renown,
Upon the orb of earth! there cometh One,
Before whose star, that pearls the eastern sky,
Thy regal splendors to a rushlight pale.
Planets shall thrill with music to their core,
The morning stars will sing together, all
The universe, in one harmonious choir,
Swell anthem to His birth! Before His power
The subtleties of force that shackle men,
Shall shrivel with the wind. The pomp of man,
Yea, all the vanities of earthly life,
Shall melt, like mists of morning, in the sun.
Men's hearts will bleed at mention of His name,
That never pulsed in kindly thought of thee.
Greater than thou, the power of His faith
Will lead the world as with a silken string.
His weapons will be meekness, love and truth;
Humility His armor—charity His shield!

He will be lowly born, and never know
The sated pleasures of luxurious life.
The dross of gold ne'er stain His hands, and yet,
His riches will outrank the wealth of earth.
Children of coming men will cling to Him,
Like lisping babes to the maternal arm.
The grace of mercy will steep all His acts,
And culture penitence to faith in Heaven.
His gracious love will light the souls of men,
To read the spirit of the living truth.
And when His death hath paid man's debt of sin,
He will have borne all, and forgiven all !

*[During this recital CÆSAR moves uneasily,
but listens, as do all within hearing,
with rapt attention. CALPHURNIA sobs
upon CÆSAR'S shoulder.]*

Cæsar. What can this be,
That smote my heart as with the thong of truth?

[To ANTONY.]

Question her not ! Her words have ill effect
Upon our auditory. Take this woman hence !
Deal with her kindly ; see to all her wants,—
She looks toil-worn and weak, and needeth rest,—
For hospitalities are sacred here,
And if she bore the thunderbolts of Jove
We'd sup her, ere she hurled them !

[Exit Nazarene, who is led off the stage.]

Antony. This is no device of thine enemies.

BY YOU

And, if her mission to thee's not divine,
She doubtless thinks it such.

Cæsar. Well said, my good and loyal Antony.
Oh, can it be that Rome shall yet become
A second Babylon, and shrink to dust!
Yet, pshaw! The currents of events are shaped
By mental strategy and powers of mind,
And under ye, ye gods, in face of men,
Still Cæsar rules the world!

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I.

Room in BRUTUS'S mansion, with garden back. Lady Minstrel, with harp, seated at the hearth. PORTIA seated at a table. Page LEONTI near her.

Portia. Can you see aught of Brutus yet, Leonti?

Leonti. My honored mistress, I have scanned the
road

With eager, wistful eye, but see him not.

Portia. The evening air is cool,—bring me my
cloak,

And I will tarry here till he returns.

[LEONTI *assists to place the mantle over*
PORTIA'S shoulders.

Full twenty years has Hymen's knot been tied,
Yet, my heart flutters in pulsation fast,
To hear the footfalls of the steed that bears
The noble Brutus to his faithful Portia.
Peace and contentment cannot nestle in
My longing heart until he doth return ;
For love, in nervous apprehension quick,
Quakes with the sparrows' twitter.

[PORTIA *rises.*

O spirit of love,
Unquenchable and unconquerable !
It is immortal as the gods ! it sheds
A glowing radiance o'er the wastes of life.
It singeth with the stars ! It germs in all
The fruitful sap of nature, and its song
Trills with the purling brook ; in lispings waves
And foaming seas its gracious murmurs swell.
And in the swaying boughs of wind-tossed trees
It murmurs heaven's grace to erring hearts.
It soothes all pain and woe and lessens grief.
It melts all cares, as doth the morning sun,
Dissolve the vapors that becloud the dawn.
It guides the tottering step of aged man,
O'er the receding sands of time, until
His footfalls echo with the past, and death,
With solemn requiem, lulls to lasting sleep.
Now, good Leonti, can you see my lord ?

Leonti. One moment, madame.
The wind is strong within the valley ; now
I see a shadow in a cloud of dust.
It may be he, and, as it nears the ridge,
The slanting sunbeams pierce it. Yes, 'tis he !
It is Lord Brutus, and he waves his hand
Aloft in salutation.

Portia. Hie to the gates, and help him to dismount.
And tell him I await him here.

[*Exit* LEONTI.]

[*Addressing* Minstrel.] Poor child, and art thou stronger now, and is

Thy comfort well assured?

Minstrel. It is, my noble madame. Oh, I feel
A gratitude too deep for words, and hope
My dear-loved harp may thank you.

Portia. My thankful girl, I will exact such payment.

Your crude art, music, is, as yet, degraded.
Beyond the culture of the world,—and ignorance
Doth ever tread on lowly merit. Yet,
There's that in harmony, will need and have
The definition of skilled science.
Keep in the foremost rank, and I will see,
You prosper with its growth.

Enter BRUTUS and LEONTI.

Brutus. My own Portia!

Portia. Oh, Brutus, thou art late,
And how my humor stern would chide thee now,
But for my foolish heart!

Brutus. I am the Prætor, and the care of office
Should have delayed me longer, unkind wife.
Few women know how e'en the heartiest men,
Who smile at all the adverse storms of fate,
And brave all forms of earthly peril, crave
The soft contentment of a tranquil home.
And I am happy here. If Cæsar swelled

His power and grandeur twenty-fold, I would
Not change my place for his. And who is that?
Yon girl who leans her head upon her harp
In melancholy thought?

Portia. I had forgotten mention of her presence.
A scribe had just informed me, one in Rome
Had manuscript of rare import to sell;
And as I sought the place I found this girl,
Homeless, sick,—nay, starving on the streets.
I brought her home and gave her kindly care.
She is a vocalist of wondrous skill,
One of those rare musicians nature makes,
Without a fault or blemish. But, alas
For this poor child of song! e'en heaven-born birds
Must sing from gilded cages, to be heard,
And win the world's applause.

Brutus. Oh, my observant, noble-minded Portia!
Blessed is the hand that heals a human ill!
And many a time and oft, beloved Portia,
Man, on the plane of simple merit rising,
Finds his true level when it is too late.
For Genius, though blest of heaven, is not
The child of fortune, and so fares, alas,
The heaven-gifted author, when he's poor,—
Hedged in by want—impaled by criticism,—
He struggles till his great heart breaks, and then,
Posterity alone doth crown his work!

Portia. [*To Minstrel.*] You are recruited now,

In mind and body and of voice assured.
So, let my noble Brutus feel the power,
That hedges in thy gift.

Minstrel. I will, most gracious madame, and the
glow

Of thankfulness shall warm my simple song
To soothe your generous hearts. [Sings.

Brutus. Skill, warmth, expression, and a latent
power

Of higher, greater scope lie in her song.

Portia. You may retire, child ; adapt the day
To your own will and pleasure.

[Exit Minstrel.]

Did Cæsar and Calphurnia both attend
The Feast of Lupercal ?

Brutus. I am assured they did, and that the Cæsar
Did thrice refuse acceptance of a crown,
Was tendered him by Antony, and gave
Good, honest reason for it.

Portia. Alas ! My Brutus, how my every sense
Of human feeling sickens with his name !
Carnage and desolation mark his path.
And yet the gods endure him, it may be
He is their scourge on earth !

Brutus. And yet the world's applause is ever his,
And he can delve in adulation deep,
Disport himself to the admiring world,
For he has conquered earth.

Portia. Conquerors ! What are they ? They personify
Brute force and selfish power, and for them
Brave men march to their graves, with arms in
hand,—
And none lament them but the stricken few
Whose bread fails with their death. And oft they
stake
Ten thousand poor men's lives upon a chance,
And call it strategy. Enduring gods !
What seas of toleration circle heaven !
What floods of charity ! What boundless depths
Of magnanimity encompass ye,
That heaven's lightnings have not smitten earth,
And riven it to chaos !

Brutus. Woman of peerless soul ! my own, my
Portia !

The pit'less strifes of men are ever wrought
In the arena of the Fates, and thy
Pure, gentle nobleness of nature, e'er
Shrinks from such ordination. Seek thee here.
Let us enjoy the quiet bliss of home,
And scatter speculation to the winds.
The sun has set ; oh, what a hallowed glow
Of mellowed sunlight covers all the earth !
The twilight deepens, and the evening air
Breathes to the heart a sense of peaceful rest.

[*Knocking at the gates.*

Portia. Are we in pledge to entertain some friends,

Or is it some chance visitor?

Brutus. As all the duties of the day are spent,
'Tis likely some of my official friends,
Will spend the evening here. Waive all delays,
And show them hither.

[*Exit* LEONTI.]

Enter CASSIUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, DECIMUS, CIMBER,
and DENTATUS.

Most noble senators,
You honor Brutus with this friendly call.
Cassius, my glowing heart is in my hand.
My good friend Casca, I will match thy palm,
Tingling with honest blood. Yours, Trebonius,
Decimus, Cimber, and Dentatus.
This is my faithful helpmeet, Portia,
Who guides the helm of our domestic bark
O'er hospitable seas, where every breath
Of air doth waft a cheery welcome.

Dentatus. Most honored madame,
There is no warrant in our poor deserts,
To merit thy kind welcome, yet we trust
Your generous mind will help our grateful sense,
To an accordant balance.

Portia. I much regret, my good and honored
guests,

That lack of timely notice will impair
My fullest, amplest service.

Casca. Let me assure you, madame, we ne'er
gained

Our robes of state as senators of Rome,
By dainty service in official halls;
But grew as factors of the state, because
We shared the fare and hardship of its wars.
The cuisine of the camp hath still such potency
Upon our hunger-haunted memories,
That e'en the humblest fare beneath your roof,
Will prove most unctious to our palate.

Brutus. And what of drink, good Casca?

Casca. The quality of drink
Is tempered by the giving: we all know
A niggard welcome spoils the choicest wine.
Yet we are all philosophers, dear Brutus,
And take it as we catch it.

Portia. Most noble Casca, you are blest in this,—
Beneath the sallies of thy wit, e'er bides
The wisdom of good nature.

Casca. Judge all my acts and words with friendly
charity,
Cherish me ever in your generous thoughts,
But call me not good natured.

Brutus. And why not, my good Casca?

Cassius. Is there an illustration, pendent here?

Trebonius. Now, good friend, explain

And justify thyself to noble Portia.

Casca. I can and will,
With the conviction to my mind assured
By bought experience. You all may note
'Tis the good-natured fellow, after all,
Wreaks many current ills of life on men.
He is so bright and winsome, he disarms
Our cautious nature, with a cheering smile ;
And thus, in ventures dire and projects rash,
He launches our good moneys, and they're lost !
In snares and pitfalls he has us engulfed,
That, for a surly and ill-natured man,
We ne'er had set a foot in ! Ay, and oft,
He steals away from us the love of one
More dear than life itself, and we stand by,
Like asses of the Fates, and help him do it !
So, e'er serene, in guileless unconcern,
He leaves our care and trouble to the keep
Of our discretion,—while he shares our joys,
And sips the honey of our happiest hours.
This, while the moody, ill-conditioned man,
With his own plans and projects self-imbued,
Walks in the narrow groove of his own thoughts,
And worketh harm to none !

Senators. Bravo ! Bravo ! good Casca !

Portia. I thank thee, noble sir.

Prismatic colors could not hold their tone
Against such logic.

Brutus. And now, kind friends, we'll to the dining-hall.

Then, in the cool of evening, we can hie
Unto our terrace by the silent wood,
And in condoling counsel we will lift
The weighty cares that press our spirits down.

SCENE II.

The terrace by the wood.

Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, CASCA, TREBONIUS, DECIMUS,
CIMBER, *and* DENTATUS.

Brutus. Friends, senators, and brothers,
Here in these quiet, solemn aisles of nature,
Under the peaceful stars, we can commune.
Oh, let us pray, my earnest, honest friends,
In that we know that we are bold and venturesome,
Let not the charm of the heroic snare
Our souls to action foul and sin corrupt,
Or drive us, like the asses of the Fates,
To work our own undoing.
'Tis said the witchery of treason draws
Within its circle sinister, brave men,
Rash but impulsive, honest, but who lack
The cool discretion of a balanced mind.
Now, ask our inmost hearts, are we, then, such?
Or, is our action fostered by the sense

Of public good and patriotic duty?
I feel our purpose hath such ground, and now
Let us in open converse sound our thoughts,
And thus concert our act.
Speak freely, then, of Cæsar,—all his lust
Of arbitrary and despotic power.
Make to our minds conviction clear and prone.

Casca. He hath usurped the functions of the law,
And, sitting as a judge, his mind is ruled
By whim, caprice, and alternating doubt.
His fitful humors are the only code
By which he tempers his judicial acts.
As judge would he non-suit the flight of time,
Apportion all the hours as he pleased,
And call it law, because it served his whim.

Brutus. He hath no legal training, and thus lacks
The finesse of judicial acumen.

Cassius. A judge forsooth!
Why, when his humor spins Cæsarian law,
Truth waits upon his whim, and Justice begs,
In threadbare raiment, for her scantiest needs.
If he but parcelled to his own deserts,
Such meed of punishment as he gives men,
His seat were vacant and his calling dead.

Deniatus. And there is more, my friends, we have
to fear
Than this subversion of the Roman law.
Experience and observation teach,

When grasping rulers wish to centralize
The power of a nation in themselves,
They duly seek to curb and circumscribe
The most potential body in the state.
This is their primal action ; at the last,—
Why, men are slaves, too base to know their doom.

Cassius. And thus hath Cæsar wrought with us,
the Senate.

He grants us legislative action but
To soothe, condole, and palliate our shame.
His greetings savor of offence, and he
Endures us with the tolerance of scorn.
He shuns our counsel, and alone he strides
In peerless vanity, above us all.
No argument can reach him, no appeal
Can modify or alter his decree.
No open effort could dislodge him now ;
Our soldiers are his satellites, and all
The fawning, cringing placemen hedge his power.
Brutus, thou art a scholar, is there aught
In reason or philosophy, that fits
This abject showing to the public good ?

Brutus. Alas, alas ! good friends,
I see it all and the conviction apt.
If all the world were bound to this one man,
It would be mercy for us all to die ;
And let him sate his soul with full possession,
And feel the bitter, mocking, aching void

Of isolated grandeur. Yet I ask,—
So am I troubled in my mind, good friends,—
Where is the remedy, so swift and sure,
That can the pall of our oppression rend?
Why, this man Cæsar is so trenched in power,
So widely watchful, and so well beset,
That in one hour's scope he could forestall
Our every act and hem us to the death.

Cassius. We have bethought us of all that, dear
Brutus ;

And with trite, honest candor, now, I ask
What can we do but slay him? You may start!
Once in her peril, had not Mother Rome
Amongst her cherished offspring haply found
A Brutus brave, the Tarquin could at will,
Have revelled in the countless lusts of sin,
And flooded earth with crime.

Brutus. Alas, my noble friends, alas!
We should have been more watchful in the past.
The cowards' refuge but awaits us now.
Yet secret methods shall not snare his life,
But he must perish in the glare of day,
And by our hands alone.
And now, my friends,
Who is there here with nerve and tact enough,
With judgment cool and purpose self-sustaining,
To lead us in this butchery?

Cassius. Why, here's our good friend Casca.—

He is a master, second but to Cæsar.
Why lop the trunk, and let the thriftiest branch
Take root and flourish, to our own despite?

Brutus. Now, pause ye here!

Are we so niggardly of courage, then,
So lost in honest, self-assertive right,
That we must fear to face a valiant Roman?
Shun open valor, and but skulk in crime,
To hedge in murder foul? Oh, scorn the thought!
Cold hand of butchery alone can serve
Our duty's end with Cæsar. For we sat
In coward patience while his power o'ertopped
The law, our legislation, and the state.
Then, with our deed confessed before the world,
We parry blow for blow, and give and take,
In manly candor for the nation's weal.

Casca. Besides, I have no fear of Antony.
For once, when sickness smote the Cæsar, and
His death seemed imminent, I sounded Antony:
I told him that if august Cæsar died,
No doubt his mighty valor and renown,
Would fit him for his place; and then I marked
The thought that blossomed in his kindling eye,
The sigh of longing that burst from his breast,
Were all akin, and glowing but with self.
Yea, Antony must profit by his death,
And profit lessens rancor, smothers hate,
And courts mild toleration.

Trebonius. Upon what place, then, shall our deed
bestow
Renown historic and a fame world-wide?

Brutus. There is no place
So fitting as the Senate chamber; there,
Upon the altars of our country, we
Will immolate this tyrant.

Trebonius. Then fix the time, the signal too, and
all
Immediate detail for our act to-day.

Climber. Then let our action hang upon this cue :
When all petitions have been heard,
Then I, surrounded by a group of brother senators,
Will kneel in supplication to this man,
And beg his mercy for my banished brother.
When he has aired his vanities of speech
In one reiterate refusal, I
Will clutch him by the robe and pull him down.
Then doughty Casca gives the maiden stroke,
And all may in accordant action join.

Brutus. Both simple and well planned !
Let it be so.
Now, in this act of high and dread import,
We all are bound as principals, nor brook
Any accessories, among us here.
If Casca's thrust should snap his mortal life,
Our daggers all must follow ! then each blow
Will strengthen its precursor, and thus all,

Bound in an equal interest and intent,
Will stand or fall as one.

Cassius. When my turn comes, he'll get it to the
hilt,

Though he had suffered twenty deaths.

Casca. [*Feeling the point of his weapon.*] Cæsar
never loved me, but yet
I'll find a way to reach his heart.

Brutus. And now, kind friends,
Before we part, I earnestly implore
That you be very cautious and discreet,
And cool observant. Casca, wilt thou give
Some words of parting counsel?

Casca. Let us assume a natural manner, gentlemen.

The veriest stranger, looking now on us,
Grouped here in taciturn solemnity,
Could fathom a set purpose, that distracts
The flow of current life and spirits. Why
Should we all move, and creak, and hinge about
Like automatic puppets, while each face
A visage wears of lachrymose distention,
Too quaintly solemn for a funeral?

Brutus. Oh, brilliant philosophic scoffer! Thou
Dost know the shafts of counsel, barbed with keen,
Sarcastic humor, probe with deepest stroke
The heart of a collective body. Now,
My patient friends, the early gray of dawn

Is flushing with the sunlight, and the air
Is glowing with a newly-wakened life.
Hie to your homes, refresh yourselves with rest.
Be wise, discreet, and careful of your speech,
And then, in duteous session, at the Senate,
We all will meet together.
A brief adieu,
Good, honest friends, adieu !

[*Exeunt* CASCA, TREBONIUS, DECIMUS,
CIMBER, and DENTATUS..

Good brother Cassius, tarry here awhile,
And bid my servant pair a horse with thine,
Then we can ride in company together,
And counsel by the way.

Cassius. It will befit us well to do this, brother,
For dire circumstance so rules the day,
Our best discretion should wait on our acts
And guide us to the end.

[*Exit* CASSIUS.

Brutus. O ye eternal gods ! and is there, then,
A maelstrom rippling at my keel of life ?
And am I drifting in the whirling pool
Of narrowing circles, to the final wreck
Of all the freighted treasures of my life ?
And yet—
Why should I pause, in gruesome fear and doubt ?
I see my duty plainly. Thoughts of self,
Nor selfish aims, nor e'en a life's content,

Should stem the tide that floods the patriot heart
To do our duty's battle.

Enter PORTIA.

Portia. Brutus!

Brutus. Portia!

Portia. Oh, my loved Brutus. Oh, what can this mean?

Thy brows are knitted with a half-score years
Since yester-morn. Thy earnest, loving eyes,
Once, to their fullest depths, so frank and clear,
Now lack the honest flash of innate truth,
And sink, abashed, before my gaze. These men
Came, at thy bidding, to our cherished home;
And, under cover of the silent night,
Whetted some purpose foul. What can this mean?

Brutus. Believe me, Portia,
They counselled with me on affairs of state.

Portia. Indeed!

Rome is at peace, and why, then, should they shun
Their honest post of duty at the Senate,
And shirk discussion there? Thou knowest well,
Cabal and intrigue never prospered Rome,
And what she gained, beyond the nation's thrift,
Her honest courage wrested from the world,
With open face, and arms poised in the light.

Enter CASSIUS at the rear.

That man! that plotting spirit of unrest!
His evil eye can blast our household gods.

He is of fearful omen to our house.

Why tarries he, when all the rest are gone?

Brutus. We ride to Rome, in company together,
On affairs of business, ere the Senate meets.

Portia. Oh, Brutus, leave me not!

Brutus. Through years
Of patient toil and study, pain and care,
I've reared a fabric of high honor; yet
A woman's fears would crumble it to dust.

Portia. Oh, hear me, Brutus!
Thou knowest that through all our wedded life,
When duty called thee to the battle-field,
I girded on thy sword with loving zeal.
If thou hadst fallen on the field of strife,
Thy face in open candor turned to heaven,
I would have closed thine eyes with reverent care,
The proudest matron in all Rome.—But now,
I feel I know thy going hence will leave
Our hearthstone desolate and my life a blank.
Kneel with me, Brutus, let us pray the gods
May guide us in the right.
Oh, I implore thee, Brutus, leave me not!
The day is foul with sinister intent,
That would ensnare thee to thy doom. These men
Scarce touched thy food and wine; they seemed
As in accordant meditation wrapt
Of some defined design. I noted, too,
The finest landscape that environs Rome,

Won ne'er a glance from them, for nature hath
No charms for crafty men, while fell design
Broods o'er the nestling evil of their hearts.
Then, as a loving, faithful, duteous wife,
I beg thee, leave me not!

[CASSIUS *makes a signal to one without ;
then a trumpet call is heard.*

Brutus. 'Tis the call of the legion! Honor,
Portia,

My honor I have pledged, doth call me hence.
That choicest jewel of a human soul,
No thought of home or self shall e'er becloud.
Farewell! Oh, thou best loved of earth, farewell!
And may the merciful and gracious gods,
Protect and shelter thee, and calm thy grief.

Portia. Oh, Brutus, if thou goest now, I feel
Death and dishonor pace with every step.

[PORTIA *approaches him with wavering steps.*
Come, oh, beloved Brutus, to my arms!
Come to thy Portia, as in days of yore,
When earth and heaven blended us in joy!
Brutus!

Brutus!

Brutus!

[*Shrieks and falls.*

ACT III.

SCENE I.

A room in CÆSAR'S palace. CÆSAR seated at a table.

Cæsar. [Solus.] If sin were shown us in its right-
ful mien,
And every vice clothed in its proper garb,
How few would fall from grace, or yield their souls
To dalliance with evil! Foulest sins
Are oft in splendor dressed ;—the rankest wrongs,
Course evil's limits with so soft a gait,
They cheat our conscience with their slothful ease ;
Sin's gilded bark can swim on seas serene,
And where the air is balm, drift with the wind.
And honor, truth and virtue may be wrecked,
On such smooth waters, e'en repentant man,
Cannot conceive the death of his own sin,
Until his spirit flies the dross of earth.

*Enter CALPHURNIA, back from garden, with a bunch
of flowers. Puts her hands on CÆSAR'S eyes.*

And who is this, that dares encroach upon
Our philosophic study, in this wise ?

Calphurnia. One who owns thee! *Veni, Vidi, Vici!*

Cæsar. 'Tis even so, my own Calphurnia.
I had a void at heart, thy form doth fill.
Come, sit thee down, and let me gaze upon
The frankest eyes that ever blessed the face.
And now, my own good wife, what does this mean?
The flitting shadow of unrest o'ercasts
Thy sweet and loving face. Hast thou been ill?

Calphurnia. I had trailed a rose-tree in the
garden,
Around my casement, and it bore a rose,
Exhaled such fragrance to my grateful sense,
Bloomed in such glowing beauty to the sun,
I named it after thee, and gave it care
Zealous and unremitting, yet it died.—
While all its late companions grew, and spread
Their petals to the sunny air.—I feared
This was of evil omen to our house.
And well thou knowest, I have ever feared
The envies of mankind might do thee hurt.

Cæsar. Oh, have no fear of that, my own Calphurnia.
Envy is, in itself, an inert vice,
Palsies endeavor in its devotees,
And gnaws the hearts of its own worshippers.
Why, envious men beset my every path,
And fume, and fret, and hiss, as I press on.

For in the ebb and flow of current life,
What waves of petty malice lash the strands
Of human act and effort! Comrades, too,
And friends, for whom a fond affection twined
Tendrils of friendship in our very hearts,
Seek vulnerable spots, to stab us there,
And drain the pet ambition of our lives.

Oh, such men murder not! with keener scent,
They strangle aspiration in its birth,
And torture but the spirit.

Confess, my own dear wife, a simple rose,
That dies in course of nature, could not give
Such unrest to thy spirit.

Calphurnia. Ay, that is true, loved Cæsar; yet I
dread

To tell thee more, for I have had a dream.
Oh, I have had a horrid, monstrous dream.
My sleeping sense was palsied with a fear,
So deep and dread, that I could scarcely breathe,
Until full daylight calmed my wakened sense.

Cæsar. Be not afraid! I have no faith in dreams.
Why, dreams are flimsier than the spider's web.

Calphurnia. And dost thou, truly, think so?

Cæsar. I do, Calphurnia.

The gossamer fabric which the spider weaves,
Hath both intent and purpose,—and each thread
Is instinct with design and fills its place,—
But dreams,

The gossamer fabric of the sleeping brain,
Are spun but from the fantasies of thought,
And shrivel with the dawn.

Calphurnia. Thou hast not always held, my own
loved Cæsar,
Such estimate of dreams.

Cæsar. At what time have I given sign, or word,
Or intimation, otherwise?

Calphurnia. Once, when surrounded by the wily
Gaul;

And once, when the Helvetian pressed thee sore.
Each battle, then, was presaged by a dream,
That gave thee hope, and strength, and victory.
After each battle won, thou told'st me so.

Cæsar. The memory of woman,
In that wherein she contradicts a man,
Is as infallible as fate.
What was the dream, had power to infect
Such sterling sense as thine?

Calphurnia. I dreamed I floated in the realms of
space.

Bleak silence reigned supreme o'er all,—and yet
The hum of whirling planets thrilled the air,
Like murmurs from wave-beaten shores,—all space
Was desolate and void,—yet, shadowy forms,
Drifting, like clouds, before a swelling blast,
Surged all around me. The stars were dim.
The moon was waning, and her dying beams

Fell, like spent arrows, through the gloom,—and then,
There came a cloud,—a black and lowering cloud,—
And from its rankest depths, peered forth thy face.
Thy laurel crown was dripping blood,—thine eyes
Brimmed with a misery, so full, so deep,
No human aid could quell their mute despair.
Then, sprang I forth to clasp thy sinking form,
And as I did, loved Cæsar, I awoke,
And found thee in my arms!

Cæsar. My own Calphurnia! o'er a mind relaxed
By dreams, weird fantasies of truant thoughts
Troop ever, in high revelry. Fear not!
I have too many friends, keep zealous watch
Upon my health, my person, and estate,
For aught of ill to mar the fullest scope
And usance of my life.

Calphurnia. And I believe it, as I pray, 'tis true!
Thy friendship is as constant as the sun,
And warms men's hearts to give thee full requital.
I think you have an honest friend, in Antony.
Alas! he is the slave of woman! with
Her witcheries of charms is so enthralled,
He hath no depth of love for any man.

Cæsar. And what of Brutus, then, my own good
wife?

Calphurnia. Thy best-loved cherished Brutus, even
he
Hath not been here a fortnight.

Cæsar. I have no mortal dread, like many men,
And if my honor were at stake, I'd face

All men alive, and laugh at any odds.
Nor will I, in the zenith of my power,
Abate one hair's breadth, of the full respect
And dignity accordant to my state.
Nor will I, like an arrant coward, shun
The wayward chances of a mortal fate.

Calphurnia. Now, hear me, Cæsar!
'Tis said the brave are ever credulous,
And in the softness of their natures, lose
The thrift of war's strong arm. Now, list to
me.—

Thou hast a double nature, oh, my Cæsar,
And one undoes the other. When dread war
Lets loose her myrmidons of carnage, then
Thou'rt all alertness, caution and suspicion.
There's not a scent of adverse motive then,
Thou canst not trace, and kill, or run to cover.
But, basking in the idle sun of peace,
The supine lethargy of laz'ed content,
Doth sap and quench the spirit of thy soul,
And thou'rt a listless dreamer! men could plot
Thy ruin to thy very face, and thou,
Serenely wrapped in doting confidence,
Would'st press the hand that hides the barbed shaft,
And bides but time to strike.

Cæsar. Well said, my noble wife, thou art inspired.

No pang of jealousy e'er cut a heart.

More keenly than thy truth. Thy love hath wrought
The lore of worldly wisdom in thy mind,
And I were blind, indeed, to go astray,
When such a trusty light beams in my face,
To guide me on my path. Now, from this hour,
I'll counsel with thee, as my truest friend.
And, to allay thy nervous fear, to-day,
I double my guard. Without there!

Enter Officer.

I will have double escort to the Senate.
And, lest the act should breed some idle comment,
Make it appear as a reward of merit,
By picking men who have excelled, of late,
In discipline, in arms, and martial bearing.

[Exit Officer.]

There are some matters pending in the Senate,
Need the approval of my person, there.

Calphurnia. But, my noble Cæsar,
Thou wilt not tarry long?

Cæsar.

No, Calphurnia!

I will not dally with the day; each minute
Shall bear its freighted tribute to the hour,
Until our work is done. Await me, here.
Let gentle patience curb your loving zeal;
In a few hours I'll return to thee.

[Exit. Cheers without.]

Calphurnia. [*Looking from the casement.*] What
crowds are there! And how they
cheer him, now!

He fills the public eye with awe and wonder.
And those, among the crowd, who make no sign,
Gaze on him, in mute admiration wrapt.

[*Trumpet sounds.*]

And now, they start! Oh, as he strides along,
In peerless majesty amidst his guards,
The pride, the pomp, the glory of all Rome,
Go with him, and my poor heart too! And now
The haze of distance shrouds him,—now his form
Melts in the vapors of the day. Oh, Cæsar!
I love thee better than a thousand lives.
If e'er my wanton temper crossed thy spirit,—
If womanly caprices ever tried
Thy zealous love for me, forgive me, Cæsar,
And when thou dost return unto my arms,
My love will guess each want,—my duty done,
Forestall thy every wish,—and thou shalt know
The peaceful pleasure of a happy home;
That, through life's fullest measure, thou shalt bless,
The lucky stars that gave thee thy Calphurnia!

SCENE II.

A street in Rome.

Two Soothsayers at an altar, back.

Enter BRUTUS and CASSIUS from the right; CASCA from the left, with papers in his hand, meeting.

Brutus. Our good friend Casca, what have you there,

So carefully in hand?

Casca.

Petitions all!

Which beg of Cæsar, that which simple law

- Should render to us, if we slept.

Brutus. It would seem,

E'er since our plan of action hath been laid,

The very air doth whisper our intent;

And the contagion of suspicion lurks

In every breath we draw. Hast thou observed,

That Cæsar hath a double guard to-day?

Casca. Oh, yes. There's no significance in that!

As inward vanity doth swell a man

His outward pomp and ostentation grow.

In time, forsooth, a legion will wait on

His morning ministrations.

Cassius. There must be rapid action in this business,

For in the public mind, there ever lurks

A crude foreshadowing of great events.

Casca. And this is why, in our potential act,
Necessity may breed anticipation.

So, my good Cassius, hast thou never thrown
The bait of purpose with the rod of chance?

Cassius. I have, and caught my game.

Brutus. Still, my good Cassius,
We are not fishermen, who trust to luck,
But have a settled purpose, wisely laid.

[*Cheers without.*

A cheering crowd and Cæsar wends this way.
Here let us stand where we can watch these men ;
Their trade is mystery, and there's covert work
In all they say and do.

• *Enter CÆSAR with Guard.*

First Sooth. Hail, mighty Cæsar !

Cæsar. Come hither, sir ! I recollect thy face.
I am exultant, happy, fixed in power,—
Glorious in healthful life ; and yet,
The ides of March have come !

First Sooth. Yea, but they're not yet gone !

Cæsar. Pshaw ! thou dreamer,
Few dreams survive their current nights,
But thine, hedge thy dull wits for aye. Pass on !

*As CÆSAR would proceed, Second Soothsayer presents
himself.*

Cæsar. Why, here's another fellow ! what would'st
thou ?

Second Sooth. Oh, mighty Cæsar, I've a paper here,
Of greater import than thy natal star.
Life, power and happiness depend upon
Thy prompt perusal of this paper.

Cæsar. Thou would'st assail my fears. Know then,
that if

Birds of ill-omen, even fly in pairs,
The cares of state need our attention first.
Your paper hither. Give it to my scribe.

Second Sooth. Oh, gracious Cæsar, let me then
implore

And beg of thee,——

Cæsar. No more! I will not hear you.

[As CÆSAR motions the Soothsayer to give his paper to the Secretary, CASSIUS diverts the Secretary's attention, while CASCA takes the paper from the Soothsayer, and rapidly substitutes another paper for it, which he gives to the Secretary.]

Second Sooth. He hath exchanged the paper! All
is lost!

I'll hie me far from Rome, and there I'll bide
The chances of the day.

[Exeunt Soothsayers.]

Cæsar. Let us pass on, and brook no more delay.
Why, Brutus, Cassius, Casca, brother senators,

Lend me your gracious presence, and together,
We'll pass on to the Capitol.

Brutus. We all will follow.

[*Exeunt CÆSAR and Guard.*

An hour later, and Rome's grateful heart
Will throb and quicken with the rapturous air,
Of freedom, once again!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.

*The Capitol. The Senate in session. CÆSAR seated.
Pompey's statue at the right.*

Cæsar. Most noble senators of august Rome,
It hath befallen me, of late, to hear
You have some honest condemnation made
Of me, as growing of a colder mien;
Hard to approach, imperious and proud.
In conscientious apprehension, I
Beg your acquittance of this causeless charge;
For maudlin arrogance hath ne'er beset
My sober sense,—and I have ever held,
He who is drunk with pride will reel from power.
And yet, I beg you, noble friends, remember
The pride and honor of our state, reflect
A conscious dignity and high respect,
On him who heads your peerless body here.

If any acts of mine, seem to have shown
The haughty scorn of self-begotten pride,
Or, have wrought aught to tarnish, and becloud,
The gloss and honor of your high estate ;
In heart-wrung grief I will lament your charge ;
Yea, tears as gracious as the fruitful rain,
Will heal your wounded honor with their balm !
So, by the grace of heaven, we will blend
In full and sweet accord of friendly duty,
And time will lavish happy, honored days,
On the fair vistas of our future life.
Pray tell me, Brutus, where is Casca now ?

Brutus. I saw him but a moment since.

Cæsar. I beg thee have an eye on him : he wears
A look of downcast meekness on his face,
That bodes some mischief.

Brutus. I think he hath been ill.

Cæsar. And I can well believe it :
No body could be sound with such an eye.
I fear the apathy of slothful ease,
Hath sapped my faculty of observation.
My duty to myself grows strong and clear.
After to-day, the hub, as it revolves,
Shall sound and temper every spoke. And now,
What seek you all of Cæsar ?

First Petitioner. I humbly beg a pardon for my
brother.

Cæsar. And thou ?

Second Petitioner. A pardon for an uncle and a
father,

Exiled on mere suspicion.

Third Petitioner. And I

A pardon for my eldest brother, who
Debauched himself with drink, on duty.

CIMBER with other Senators approaches CÆSAR.

Cimber. Great Cæsar, I, with other senators
Beg and implore thy gracious pardon, for
My poor and exiled brother.

Cæsar. I cannot swerve,
With undue clemency, from what is just.
Truth hath no variance, and right no shade.
By righteous judgments on impartial law,
The standard of society is fixed,
Cultured, and regulated, to the plane
Of sound morality and virtue. Else
The goddess of the scales might beg for light,
And rank and specious favor would corrupt
The soul of justice and the law's pure right.
The law unswerving, steady, true and pure
Must fall on all alike. Yea, man must learn
All nature yields to law. The very air,
That floats the world, that mortals breathe in life,
Exhales from settled law. The rolling earth,
So prodigal of time,—spends months and years,
In one grand, sweeping and unceasing flight.—

And yet, time's calendar doth charge the past
With every moment spent. So, trust the gods——

[CIMBER *plucks CÆSAR by the gown.* CASCA
stabs CÆSAR in the back.

That villain Casca!

[CÆSAR *turns, and wrenches the sword from*
CASCA. *Other Senators stab CÆSAR;*
then BRUTUS stabs him.

And thou too, O Brutus? then die Cæsar!

[*After CASCA stabs CÆSAR, ANTONY springs*
forward, in the act of drawing his
sword; but, when other Senators stab
CÆSAR, he stands as if in amazement.

Antony. Senators! brothers! are you mad?

[CÆSAR *reels and falls at the base of Pompey's*
statue. Then Senators cluster around
the body, ANTONY kneeling, BRUTUS
standing by CÆSAR'S body centred in
the group.

Brutus. Now, o'er this ruthless demigod of war,
The blessed angel Peace, can spread her wings,
And freedom's blessings, like the dews of heaven,
Fall on the sons of Rome!

SCENE IV.

*A street in Rome.**Enter BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA.*

Brutus. Our deed is known in every nook of Rome.

Men stood aghast, and could not trust their sense,
Then, frenzied and a-fevered, filled the streets;
Then, in a turbulent and swelling mass,
They rolled and surged towards the Forum, where
We must address them and in honest terms,
Avow and justify our act.

Casca. 'Tis but the flow of humor that succeeds
The hearty probing of a rankling wound.
In twoscore hours Rome will be as dull,
As human motive in a pedagogue.

Cassius. But where is Antony?

Brutus. He left us, dazed and broken with his grief.

Cassius. I beg you all beware of this man, Antony.
He is an orator of matchless skill.
I know his drift of manner, tongue and speech.
When Antony bodes mischief, he attunes,
His artifice of words to aerial flights,
And thus he blinds the minds of humbler men,
And lures them to the workings of his will.
I'll watch him for us, and in twoscore words,
I'll know his bent and purpose.

Brutus. Hither comes Antony,—sorrow-stricken,
Humble and abject in his mien.

Enter ANTONY.

Antony. I pray you, senators, uninvited, I
May not disturb your counsel.

Cassius. Not in the least, good Antony. Wilt
thou go
In company to the Forum?

Antony. I fear I cannot! As a mourner, I
Will tend the body of my best-loved friend.

Brutus. We beg of you, in one thing be thou
politic:

If thou art called on for a speech, be sure
Thy words give no offence, incite no riot,
Nor direct special fury against us.

Antony. Then be assured, my friends, I will refrain
From any mention of you, and your act.

Brutus. So be it then, and we will thither hie,
And in our duty stand acquit and done.

[*Exeunt BRUTUS, CASSIUS, and CASCA.*]

Enter IRENÆUS.

Antony. Come hither, Irenæus. Speed thee well.
Have men, munitions, arms, and all in train,
Beyond the city's gates, and there await
My coming.

Irenæus. But where, my master?

Antony. Where? Anywhere! You'll see my
people coming!

Now, good Irenæus, have no tidings come
About Octavius Cæsar?

Irenæus. He is within an hour's ride of Rome.

Antony. Good! and let the signal of his coming
be

A beacon-fire at the Forum's gates.

[*Exit* IRENÆUS.

Though bound and fettered by my promise here,
Now in my sorrow-stricken soul I pray,
The grace of fire divine may steep my words,
Light up resolve, and kindle manly hearts,
To right the foulest wrong e'er fell on Rome.

[*Exit* ANTONY.

SCENE V.

The Forum.

Troops of Citizens enter, right and left, with BRUTUS,
CASSIUS, CASCA, *and other Senators.*

Citizens. Woe, woe to Rome! Great Cæsar's
slain!

Now Rome is lost!

First Cit. Most honored senators,
Pray tell us, why your valiant swords have turned
Upon yourselves, and why you have lopped off

The very head and front of your estate,
And slain our mighty ruler.

Brutus. Rest all assured, we will acquit ourselves,
In honor and in conscience, for this act.

Second Cit. If there's excuse for this, why let us
have it.

Cassius. No, my good friends, no fabric of excuse
Need rear its flimsy shelter o'er our act.
As Cæsar grew ambitious,—narrow earth,
Could not encompass his designs, and so,
We loosed the fettered bonds of life for him.

Casca. Before to-day,
We lived, breathed, died for Cæsar.—Now,
Cæsar has died for us! Ay, and the gods'
Pure will was grafted on the act.

First Cit. And will you not address us? We
should know
Your past and future purpose.

Brutus. We will, good friends; we will at once
address you,
And honest explanation we will make,
To justify our deed.

Cassius. Now, honest Brutus,
Let our good people hear thee.

[BRUTUS ascends the rostrum.]

Citizens. Hear, hear our noble prætor, hear him!

Brutus. My noble countrymen of ancient Rome!
I trust my simple voice may reach your hearts,

And ring, in honest resonance of words,
Conviction to your souls that we are just.
I pray, let not your cooler judgment lie,
Palsied beneath a weight of fear. I hear
Coward alarm doth fill the public thought.
And thousands say that now, the foreign hordes—
Whom Cæsar checked and conquered,—now will
swarm

In countless numbers on us. Let them come!
'Tis true the doughty Cæsar deftly wove
The web of war like strategy, and yet,
Its threads and fibres were all drawn from us.
The rank and file are here, who scaled the walls
And stormed the breastworks of the enemy.
The warlike arts of Mars outlive all men,
And Roman valor did not die with Cæsar.
What is his single life, my honest friends, com-
pared

To all the desolation he hath wrought?
Each day he ruled hath cost a thousand lives.
Of all men dare I speak of this: you know,
After the battle's strife, I always sought
The widowed wives and orphaned ones, of those
Who slept in death, upon the gory field,
And with them shared the pay and spoils I earned,
As officer of his.

Citizens. Tis true, noble Brutus! hear him! hear
him!

Brutus. His strength of will, stern, strong, implacable,
Enslaved us all and bound us to his arts.
He was the insatiate god of self, and where
His life pulsated, there was no free air.
And now he's slain, we all are free again.
Peace to his ashes! He had noble qualities,
E'en such as Rome hath shown in all her great.
And now, I'll show you, friends, into what straits,
The mighty hand of Cæsar drew us all.
The sick and crippled are a burden, sure;
The healthy poor were made the food of war.
If this be true,—you must accept it such,—
How could we then support the state?

Beppo. How could we?

First Cit. 'Tis true, noble Brutus, 'tis too true.

All. Go on! go on!

Brutus. Let this event purl as a ripple on
The swelling tide of time, and then, as Rome
Sits on her seven hills in plenteous peace,
You, in the sweet accord of grateful hearts,
Will bless and honor us, who wrought this act!

[Citizens *applaud him.*]

First Cit. Well said! we may be better off, by far,

Than we divine at first.

Second Cit. I'll wager that we are! these noblemen
Have wrought the public good!

Beppo. Who doubts that, is a fool !
A fool doth lack discretion, and 'tis said,
Who lacks discretion is an ass.

[*CASSIUS ascends the rostrum.*

Cassius. And now, kind friends,
The good and generous Antony, will speak,
He, of the valiant arm and golden tongue.
And, as he knew naught of our act, he lacks
Time's cooler judgment and discretion pure.
Neither in action, thought, nor sympathy,
Had he a part or parcel, in our deed :
And yet, you'll find he will not censure us.
Remember, he was Cæsar's friend, and, if
His calm and grave serenity of mind,
Is clouded by his grief, or, warped in tone,
I beg you pardon him, as we forgive him.
If sympathetic feeling for his friend,
Gives color to his words, and casts a shade
Upon our pure, unselfish motives,—then,
I beg you pardon him, as we forgive him.
We pray you all, be temperate and wise ;
Repress all riot and unruly strife.
And, when you've heard all that the grace of words
Can give to human speech, hie to your homes,
And in the due pursuits of life, we'll find
Our peace in patience and our thrift in work.

Second Cit. Well said, good Cassius !

Beppo. Spoken like a wise and temperate man.

[*Strains of slow music heard.*

Second Cit. Now Cæsar's body is borne to us
here,
Mourned by his truest friend, brave Antony.

*The body is borne in, with ANTONY as mourner, and a
Guard of soldiery.*

First Cit. Alas ! poor Antony !
So swelled with woe that he can scarcely stand,
He'll vent his grief in honest speech to us.

Second Cit. He is the finest orator in Rome.

First Cit. When Antony speaks to the Roman
people,
Cicero talks Greek or stays away.

All. Now, order, order ! We will hear
Our good friend Antony.

[*ANTONY ascends the half-platform of the
rostrum, near CÆSAR'S body.*

Antony. My friends and countrymen of august
Rome,

My true and honest friends, you all have heard,
From other lips than mine, I have the power,
In the brain's glowing alchemy to fuse
The sparkling thought, with spirit-lightning fed ;
And mould its innate sense to general mind,
Through the soul-stirring floods of boundless
speech.

Then, give me patient ear, and in the light

Of our impartial judgments we'll confer,
While reason binds us at the feet of truth.

[CASSIUS *signals to his companions, and*
they gradually retire.

Blessed of all men,
Is he who hath no longing from his state,
But moulds his wishes to the measured tramp
Of time and circumstance. No envies then,
Mar his content, nor harass his dull life.
He glides through life, as doth the placid moon
Sail tranquilly the amber arc of heaven,
And pale in starless vapor. Yet, there are men,
Called by the gods to rule and serve mankind,
Who gravitate to place and fit their sphere,
Like planets in their orbits round the earth.
And such a man was Cæsar; here he lies;
He was the greatest man on earth, and yet,
A common subject of thy kingdom, Death.
Here earth's philosophy and reason dare
But wring their hands in ignorance and weep.
Pity my grief, in that, you know I loved
And honored him, because he loved us all.
His charities kept pace with his ambition.
Our poorest subjects were his friends;—for them
He filled our granaries with corn, and thus
Wrought for the public good with mind and hand.
Just as he reeled and fell in death, came one,
Who slaked his coward dagger in his blood;

Then, held the dripping blade aloft, and cried,
"His blood's as other men's!" and in disdain,
He threw the dagger on the bleeding corpse.
I found it in his mantle. Here it is!

[ANTONY *shows dagger. Exclamations
of disgust and horror.*

Now, listen to me, honest, valiant friends.
I know your wealth of loyalty to Rome;
I know your wealth of love for home and kin.
I know that you are lowly born and poor;
Your children may lack bread till you return,
For you can ill bestow the precious hours,
The cares of state draw from you. Yet, my friends,
In all your abject ranks, where woe and want,
Sap honest manhood and destroy respect;
Where honor's dazed, and poverty doth pour
A thousand foulest ills on hopeless man,—
In all that mire of misery, is there
One hunger-stricken and despairing man,
Bereft of every hope and joy of life,
Who, for the world's wealth, would this dagger
take
And plunge it in yon poor and bleeding corpse?

[ANTONY *offers them the dagger.*

Citizens. No, no, Antony, we could not do it.

Antony. Why, Cæsar being dead, the dagger's
stroke

Would punctuate and emphasize the wrong, no more!

Citizens. We cannot do it! we are not butchers,
we are men.

Antony. And now you weep, my friends, your
generous hearts

Swell with such pitying tears, you honor both
Humanity and heaven! Loving friends,
I pray you, one and all, look on this face!
The awful majesty of death is there.
The sins and sorrows of a mortal life,
Sit throned, in solemn grandeur, on his face!
And oh, how nature shrinks from and abhors
This ghastly summing up 'twixt earth and heaven!
And now, my gentle, earnest, pitying friends,
His poor dead hands are stiff and cold, yet, rich
With charities bestowed on us in life.
We have attuned the sympathetic chords
Of nature, to a solemn, silent grief.
Each nerve and fibre quivers to the sound,
That trickles to our ear. It is the blood
Of Cæsar, dripping on the stones of Rome!
The stones that rang and echoed to the tread
Of legions, whom he led to conquer worlds.

[ANTONY *springs up*.

Cæsar, thy dauntless spirit's with the gods!
If e'er thy Antony was false to thee,
If e'er my breast heaved with disloyal breath,
Hurl, hurl, O Jupiter, thy bolts, and strike
Me dead, at Cæsar's feet!

Citizens. Down with Brutus ! Down with Cassius !
Death to Casca ! Most noble Antony——

Antony. You are worms, then, and you turn ?

Citizens. Yes, noble Antony ! Lead us ! Death
to tyrants !

Antony. Here is his laurel, nobly won and earned.
Its circlet crowned the glory of the world.
'Tis dripping with his blood ! Take it among you :
Each gory leaf will have a voice, to swell
The currents of a retributive fate,
To one vast sweeping and avenging flood.

[Soldiers at the back light the beacon-fire.

Approaching music heard.

Now, thank the gods ! the beacon-fire at last !
Octavius ! The living Cæsar's here,
To wreak eternal vengeance on our foes.
To arms ! To arms ! My noble Romans all !
Let valor don the panoply of war.
My standards are afloat ! and where my eagles soar,
True Romans follow me !

[During the latter part of above oration,
ANTONY'S Soldiers distribute arms to
the Citizens.

OCTAVIUS CÆSAR with Retinue appears at the back
of the stage. Tumultuous greetings.

ACT IV.

SCENE I.

Camp of OCTAVIUS CÆSAR. Soldiers at table with wine. Soldiers' glee. Eight voices with trumpet obligato.

Enter MARK ANTONY and LEPIDUS. Cheers without.

Antony. Mark you, the ringing cheers for young
Octavius.

O youth, O golden youth ! thy frank and pure
And honest, earnest diffidence, doth win
E'en in thy crudest efforts, such respect,
As lightens thee of half thy labor. E'en
The wind and air-cracked visage of old Time,
Breaks into sympathetic wrinkles, when,
Led by the glamour of hope's brightest dreams,
The conscious youth first treads the vale of years.
So, Time, in pitying love and tenderness,
Rounds many crooks and angles, and doth pour
The healing balm of kind forgetfulness,
Upon the sins and sorrows of his life ;

And in the change and interest of new scenes,
Drowns all the brooding cares of memory,
With new-born duties and fresh-blossomed hopes.

Flourish of trumpets. Enter OCTAVIUS CÆSAR.

Octavius. Hail, brother Antony! in all thy years
Of martial prowess, there has never been
Such glorious outcome to the day, as might
Pall thy ambition's scope, or, sate thy soul
With apathetic ease, for thou art e'er,
The life and spirit of the field.

Antony. If this be so, still love and duty stand,
As sentries on my nature's vigilance,
And wait the pass-word of thy wishes.

Octavius. I feel I am well grafted in thy love.
The hand of valor hath a generous palm,
And, first and last, its clasp is ever true.
Now, friends and counsellors of war, here is
A chart, full drawn, and set in honest faith.
The truthful keenness of the narrowest search,
Hath probed its every line. And mark you, here,
Our enemies confront us on two hills;
Against our master strategist, Mark Antony,
The veteran Cassius has been pitted. Well!
Let honest merit rule the chance of war,
And the hot blood of his resolve, will cool,
In impotent and inglorious death. And here,
Their other wing doth fill this hill and slope.

And Brutus, here, as leader, doth unbend
His studious nature to the needs of war.
And, in a spirit of sardonic sport,
They pit this man of philosophic dreams,
Against my immature experience.
I brave the challenge ! With each task, I swear
I will such note of its example make,
That neither of us will forget the lesson.
And now, my friends, what guise of counsel will
You both prescribe, for our action, here ?

Lepidus. For the main body of our army, we,
Would both suggest inaction,—Cassius, hath
A temper that doth chafe at all restraint.
There is a hill-side farmer in our lines,
Who mulcts our need, with thrice the honest cost
Of all we buy of him,—we'll use his greed,
To ferret out the paths and by-ways here.
And thus with sallies, onslaughts and for aye,
And capture of supplies, we'll so incense
This fierce, vindictive and ill-governed man,
That he may risk a battle, premature,
To sate his frenzied choler.

Antony. And pray, Octavius Cæsar, you have
shown
With us, a wisdom far beyond your years.
Have you had culture, then, beyond our ken ?

Octavius. I am a graduate of the School of Home,
And at the blessed hearthstone, I imbibed

Sure grounded lore, that bideth me for aye.
And now, good friends, this query doth embrace
A primal point upon the field of war ;
Are we well officered? And are they all
Of well-attested merit,—or, doth gold
Exalt them in position,—or, the lack
Of it debase them,—as of yore?

Antony. No army trained for offence or defence,
That e'er was marshalled on the soil of Rome,
Hath equalled us in this. When Cæsar fell,
A mutinous affection so far spread,
Among our soldiery, I could not trust
Their valor to the keep of their discretion.
And so, I took a store of Cæsar's gold,
And searched and scoured every province through,
To find the war-scarred veterans of Rome,—
Who on their spoils and trophies, had amassed
A frugal competence, and lived in quiet.
My gold alone could lure them not,—but, when,
I proffered them both rank and office,—then,
Ambition's spark was kindled, and they left
The ploughshare in the field, and loom and forge,
Were all deserted, and they followed me.

Lepidus. These tried and trusty men will train our
force,
To such a pitch and grade of martial excellence,
That we, our warlike duties, can discharge,
In half the time raw discipline exacts.

Octavius. Yet, mental power must direct all force.
To lead our rank and file, let us have men
Who as they strike, press on, and thread the cues,
That wait upon the wary; for I hold,
Sheer cowardice can wreak no greater ill,
Than bootless courage, when with fruitless aim,
It wastes its life, its spirit and endeavor.

[*Flourish of trumpets and rolling of drums.*
Let us review our troops, and we'll assist
To foster every phase of warlike pride,
That flowers to glory in heroic hearts.

SCENE II.

*The camp of BRUTUS. BRUTUS seated at a table
arranging papers. Officer standing near table.*

Brutus. Hast thou made note I would confer with
Cassius,
And due apprisement made thereof?

Officer. I have, my lord, and he is coming now,—
Attended by his guard.

Brutus. Then, post thy guard around our tent, that
none
May enter, nor, with lightest ear, engross
A word we utter.

Officer. But should a bearer of despatches come?

Brutus. Admit no one, but Casca. And to him
Entrust all current documents.

Enter CASSIUS.

Dear brother, Cassius, I have been depressed
And moody, but thy earnest, trusting eyes,
So warm my nature, that I feel a life
So rich with friendship, is full blessed.

Cassius. Beloved Brutus,
In all the trials of our chequered life,
There's naught can lessen the serene content,
Our trusty friendship yields. And now, I need,
The thoughtful, kindly counsel of my Brutus.
Oh, I am troubled with misgiving sore,
And fear me much I lack the mental scope,
To shape our policy of action here.
The physical surroundings, here, we know,
Counsel inaction as our proper course.
In less than two months hence, the plains below,
Will melt to slimy mire,—and exhale
The seeds of miasmatic death! And thus,
Grand nature were our ally,—and would slay
Our foemen, whilst we slept.

Brutus. Why, wisdom gems thy every word,—and
from
The humbleness of merit, e'er evolves
Our self-denying and most liberal thought.
What warrant is there, then, in mind or fact,
To negative thy plan?

Cassius. Alas! I have advices here from Rome,

The reins of state are daily tighter drawn.
They have increased gratuities of food,
Amongst the needy poor,—and, e'en support
The families of men in arms with us.
So, sympathetic interest in our cause,
Grows less and weakens, with each idle day.
Oh, what a thorny path hath he,—who's called
To face vindictive foemen in the field,
And conquer prejudice at home!

Brutus. And yet, the cure
Of all, lies in one talismanic word,
Success.

Cassius. Yea, but success must be pronounced
and pure,
And in demeanor,—with exultant face,
Must wreath in smiles of happiest augury,
Assurance of the future.

Enter CASCA.

Casca. I crave your mercy! I am no courier,
Who breeds bad news to strengthen his vocation.

Cassius. Bear you despatches, then?

Casca. Not by inditement of the pen,—but, by
Disastrous memory, alone! Learn then,
A train of our supplies, consigned to Cassius,
Hath been seized by the enemy.

Brutus. And which wing of their army, Casca,
Inflicted this disaster?

Casca. That of Octavius Cæsar.

Cassius. Are we then imbeciles ! in action cursed,
Whene'er a Cæsar dares to show his face ?
And say you, then, this stripling,—this mere boy,
Hath swooped upon my corn ?

? *stepped*

Casca. He hath it all !

Why, there is not enough left to evoke
A grateful chuckle from a starving hen.
If this be but a stripling, woe to us,
When it becomes a man.

Brutus. Be patient, Cassius !

We are much more to war's disasters prone,
If we do ever underrate the foe.
Octavius Cæsar is no common man.
We know he's Cæsar's heir, and came to claim
His patrimony in the jaws of fate !
And through the fevered turbulence of Rome,
He rode, almost alone,—and bravely quelled
The mutinous arrogance of all the crowd,
To sympathetic silence.

Cassius. I fear that we have been betrayed in
this.

There is a farmer mountaineer, who gave
To us the secret of the paths,—his eyes
Glow with insatiate avarice,—and his sharp,
Peaked nose doth point his greed ! If he be guilty,
We'll give his recreant vision fuller scope,
Than earth's plain can afford.

Casca. 'Tis but
An incident of war. We would have wrought
The same to them, if they had had the corn,
And we the wit to take it.

Brutus. Thank heaven ! we have food in plenteous
store.
Let us adjust, as in our power lies,
The day's disaster, and in future plans
We'll wreak the solace of this hurt.
Adieu, good friends, may pleasant thoughts and
dreams
Brighten the chances of the morrow.

[*Exit CASSIUS and CASCA.*]

When the mind of man,
Grows freighted with a load of haggard woes,
That deepens with its brooding,—then, the soul
Revolts at this continual burden,—and
Upon the arid wastes of our despair,—
Like freshening breezes to a breathless sky,—
Flow cheerful currents of our happier thoughts,
And with the charms of life and reason, lull,
The fitful pulses of our fevered care.
And haply now, this phase of mind is mine.
Oh, as the by-gone years' illusions fade,
The glamour of our life, doth pale before
The steady lamp of retrospective fact.
And thus, the mind to cool construction, shapes,
The errors of the past, and whilst we gain

The goal of selfish ends, that maketh men,
Narrow in joys as griefs.—We little know
The heaven-wrought scheme of all-absorbing love,
That kindleth e'en the vagaries of thought,
To cure the ills of mind and heart,—and e'en,
Thoughts light and frivolous, have end and purport.
The vanities of life are given us,
As solace and distraction to our griefs.
So, in life's cares and duties, we oft find
That honest occupation, can dispel
The foul distemper of the troubled mind.
While man, unmindful of the cure,—in prayer,
Oft racks his soul with fruitless supplication,—
And begs the thrift of duties he has shunned;
When healthful work is the accordant balm,
And bideth to his will.
Leonti!

Leonti. My lord.

Brutus. Bring me my cloak, for I may walk the
camp.

A taper too! I may sit up awhile.

[*Exit* LEONTI.

There is a mute companionship in light,
But darkness cheers no man.

Re-enter LEONTI *with cloak and taper.*

Leonti, my good lad, for two years past,—
Since thy good mother placed thee in our care,

I know naught of thy parents,—live they, both?

Leonti. My mother lives, but my good father, died.
He was a fisherman,—sun-struck, at sea,
He lingered for awhile, and died in madness.

Brutus. Alas, poor man, upon the seas of mind,
His bark of reason stranded,—and with ne'er
Enough of innate sense, to test its depth,
It held there,—till he died!

And of thy mother, good Leonti?

Leonti. She has been very ill,—is better now,
But drags in wearied sickness.

Brutus. Cling to thy mother! Cherish her in
love!

See to her wants, my boy, and give her this!

[*Gives him a purse.*]

Corporeal wants to sickness are,

As ballast to a ship.

A mother's heart, with charity divine,

Compassionates our sins and sorrows both,

And grows with every need.

And now, retire to rest, my lad, and may

Youth's brightest hopes, in dreamy fabric, rear

The rainbow promise of thy future.

Leonti. Good-night, my lord!

Brutus. Good-night.

[*Exit LEONTI.*]

I will not walk the lines, the earth is damp,

And heaven's canopy hath ne'er a star.

The moon is clouded,—how the wailing wind,
Moans through the darkness-brooding valley. Well!
My boon of happy rest is spent,—I feel
A boding, gruesome sense of creeping fear.
And now I shudder at the sighing wind,
With an unconscious terror. All is quiet.

Enter GHOST OF CÆSAR.

Why, what is this? my taper has gone out!
And yet, a glow of light illumines the air.
Heard I a moan? Why should I strain my ears
To listen, and hear naught.

Ghost. Brutus?

Brutus. Ye gods!

Ghost. Brutus!

Brutus. O! shadowed wreck of Cæsar! Art
thou he?

Full dignity doth drape thy every shade!
The broad, majestic brow, is there! thine eyes,
Flashing with spirit-lightnings of a soul,
Scorch to my heart, and yet, benumb my limbs,
As with a chill of death! In pity, speak!
O Cæsar, speak to me! Or art thou, then,
An evil-omened phantom, sinister,
Whose touch blasts honest life? O Cæsar, speak!

Ghost. Fear me not, Brutus,—Cæsar loves thee
still!

Death and the grave, could not o'ercome the love

That drew my spirit to thee. Yea, not all
The butchers' knives that rent my flesh, e'er gave
Unto my heart such pang, as did thy stab!
I would have trusted thee, had gods foretold,
Disaster to our friendship.

[BRUTUS *groans*.

I'm content.

Not all the fantasies of earthly life,
The wiles of mind and body, wealth and power,
Could lure me back to earth! Thou canst not
know,

The ecstatic joys of peaceful happiness,
The gods provide above! Although my soul,
In torturous expiation shrives its sin,
Each day it grows the whiter. Ages hence,
I'll revel in peace as I once did in sin!

Brutus. O spirit of Cæsar!

May heaven speed the time! O, greater than
Thou ever wert, thy patience is sublime!

Ghost. Brutus, make thy peace with the gods!
Farewell!

I'll meet thee again at Philippi.

Brutus. 'Tis gone! And is there, then,
No barrier 'tween these worlds? Am I awake?
And do I live and breathe, and do I suffer?
Peace, troubled soul! 'Tis said of eld,
Earth swarmed with creatures of immortal parts,
Who, in capricious flittings sped o'er earth,

Who cleft at will the canopy of heaven,
Probed every depth, or, swam in boundless space,
Surging in pity o'er the earth-bound worm !
And Cæsar, mighty, still, is of them !

[Drums and trumpets heard.]

And so, majestic shade ! My duty calls
Me to the busy field ! I cannot heed
The diction of a ghost ! So, farewell, Cæsar !
We meet again at Philippi !

ACT V.

SCENE I.

*The camp of OCTAVIUS CÆSAR. MARK ANTONY,
OCTAVIUS CÆSAR, and Officers in consultation.*

Antony. Since early dawn the soldiery of Cassius,
Flaunting in all the glowing pomp of war,
Are swarming on the plains of Philippi.
He hath his "Dauntless" legion at the front:
They bear their cherished eagles, too, which I,
As spokesman of the Senate,—in the Forum,
Bestowed on them for valor in the field.
Now, make it known unto our valiant men,
For each of these said eagles, brought to us,
We will give fifty drachmas down, and grant
Each capturer, a furlough for a week.

Octavius. Before the dawn to-day,
With taunts and gibes they drove upon our lines,
A bearded goat encased in kid-skin, in
Derision of my youth,—yet, they forget,
As nature's laws perpetuate all life,
The kid outlives the goat,—and I may reign
In Rome, with credit and renown, when all
Their grizzled beards are gathered to the dust.
And now, of Lepidus, good Antony,—

As we arranged, hath he the mounted troops,
In hand and trim,—and placed as planned?

Antony.

He hath,

The flower of our cavalry.—He picked
The small and hearty upland horse, and for
Weeks past, hath trained them to the broken ground ;
And in the slope, upon the forest's verge ;
Where to the casual eye, the tall, rank grass,
But indicates a morass,—they lie hid.

Octavius. If we can lop a wing of this proud host,
This bird of treason can no longer fly !
And I have that in store for placid Brutus,
May decimate his ranks without a blow ;
And dull the fire of his resolve, unto
The baseless fritterings of weak endeavor.
Herein, I pray we may be blessed, because
Thou knowest, my friends, that we have leaders true
Of thorough culture in the art of war,
With whom courageous impulse hardly waits
On reason's cool discretion. Hear me then !
Blessed is the strategy of war, that gains
Its thrift of vantage, saving human blood ;
Nor plucks its laurels but from human graves.
Kill not for love of slaying ! Then, indeed,
Is war inherent butchery. Be firm !
Urge no brutality ! meet strength with strength !
But crush not unresisting weakness. And
Remember, in this fratricidal war,

At whomsoever, your brave swords are thrust,—
You strike a fellow-Roman!

Antony. Well said, Cæsar!
Graybeards of wisdom might define thy words,
With profit, awe and wonder.

Time wears on!

Now let us to our several duties hie,
And sheave our merits ere the day shall die.
And anxious hearts may glow with hopeful light,
While duty, faith, and courage, solve the right!
[*Exeunt.*]

SCENE II.

*The Plains of Philippi: the tent of CASCA. CASCA
seated at a table with wine, reading a despatch.*

Casca. Cæsar, the Fates are with thee!
And in the cycle of their curst device,
It seems ordained that he who led thy fall,
Shall pluck the first fruits of thy vengeance, too!
So Cassius, valiant though he be,—is with
Infirmities of temper, so afflict,
His every move is premature and rash,
And verges on our ruin.

Enter Courier.

Courier. My lord and general!
Casca. Well, man! there is no wind!
If thou art but a reed, stop shaking!

Courier. Oh, my general!

Casca. Poor fellow! thou art spent in breath!
And bear a burden of the foulest news,
Without backbone or stomach. Drink this wine.
[*CASCA gives goblet to Courier.*
Now let the bowels of thy duty, yearn
With utterance of thy mission!

Courier. Then, learn, O Casca, Cassius is defeated.
His two best legions are o'erthrown,—and he
Hath called on his reserve, and all our horse.

Casca. Yet, if
The day is lost, why further supplement
Defeat and death?

Courier. Pardon me, general! We could not let
Our comrades die, like dogs, before our face!

Casca. Bravo! Bravo! Why here's a man, whose
fears
Choked both his sense and utterance, and yet,
His brave humanity o'errides them all!
On this last day, it seems, the fading world,
Dies, on my vision, with a roseate glow!
Ho, there! an officer!

Enter Officer.

Call in our horse, in proper rank and file,
As swiftly as may be,—and I will lead
Them to the field in person.

[*Exit Officer.*

Courier. My lord and general!
I fear we have disaster still in store.
Cæsar hath offered to the troops of Brutus,
Free pardon and due transit, home, to all,
Beneath the grade of captains and lieutenants.

Casca. Indeed! pardon to all beneath the grade
Of captains and lieutenants? humph!
We will, at least, then, be well officered,
And discipline will be perfect!

*Enter BEPPO and Guard with a Prisoner, bound at
the elbow and wrists, with a rope around his neck,
which BEPPO holds.*

Beppo. Pardon us, general!
We've caught this spy within our lines, and found
A tracing of our camp, upon him! Now,
As we must to the front, are we to hang him, now,
Or wait till our return?

Casca. And if we wait for that, this man may live
To count his great-grandchildren. Bring him here.
Well, man, what is thy name?

Prisoner. Giuseppe Arno.

Casca. Ha! Ha! I thought I knew that face!
I was an officer of thine in Spain.
I had been stricken from the rolls, as Casca,
For insubordination,—yet, as Rome,
Needed my service,—as Servilius,—
My middle name,—I was restored to place.

Prisoner. Then, may I say upon the eve of death,
These words of fitting tribute to thy worth.—
A nobler, truer soldier, never lived!
Thou wert as mindful of a private's rights,
As of thine own official honor.

Casca. Why, in the very simoon of my fate,
Here wafts another grateful breeze, to me!
What's this? a tear! the first, for forty years!
I've heard that flattery cajoled the sense,
But never learned that it could rive the heart!

[*CASCA takes the rope from his neck.*
Unbind this man! we will not hang him, now!
[*Aside.*] Within an hour, he may be master here.

[*Exit BEPPO and Guard, and as they retire*
BEPPO purloins a bottle from the table.

Casca. Giuseppe Arno, we have tried of old
Our honor's mettle, and I trust in thee.
To-day, my sun of life will set in death!
So, in the wishes which I shall express,
Render me honest service.

Arno. I will, in faith and truth!

Casca. Oh! here, my steward and Anselmo!

Enter Steward and ANSELMO.

Steward. We are here, my lord.

Casca. Good Anselmo, for more than four years
past,
A faithful servant thou hast been to me.

Say, in thy bondage, hast thou ne'er longed
To see thy home and kin, again?

Anselmo. Oh, my good master! the gods alone,
Know how I've wept and prayed for that.

Casca. Then, rest content! take this!

[*Gives him a purse.*]

Be heedful of the coin! with fellow-man,
'Twill serve thee more than prayer! there is enough,
With frugal care and husbandry, to give
Comfort to all thy days.

Anselmo. My noble master!

I have no words to thank thee! yet, I say,
The comfort never shall outlive, our sense
Of gratitude to thee.

Casca. Anselmo, thou art a non-combatant,—
And Arno will insure, in proper time,
Safe transport to thy home.

Come hither, now! [To Steward.

For twenty years past, thou hast been with me,
In service, as the steward of my estates;
And in that time, it is thy due to say,
No one hath robbed me,—but thyself!

Steward. But I protest, my lord,—

Casca. Neither protest, nor, take it so to heart!
You gave me something,—and, with native honesty,
You always felt the property was mine.
I will no formal disposition make
Of my estates,—because in law, they fall,

To those knit to me by the ties of blood.
But to mankind, I do bequeath these words,
As Casca's will and testament, drawn thus.—
Of all my kind, whom I have wronged in life,—
Who have not wrought their satisfaction here,—
I ask forgiveness. Those who have wronged me,
I squared with, as I caught them! All the rest,
I forgive freely, as the true philosopher,
Condone and pardons what he cannot reach.
And now my comrade, Arno, see to this.—
Of what remains here of my finest wine,
Devote it to the wounded, sick and dying,
And to no other purpose.

[*Picks up a goblet.*

O wine, thou loadstone of false friends! Where are
Thy devotees,—the friends of happier hours,
When dire disaster palsies the free hand,
Of him who filled the ever-emptied bowl?
So, let us make atonement in this use,
For man's abuse, when all thy generous fire,
But pampers luxury and ripens lust!

[*Trumpet call without.*

The troops are ready; mine axe, it hath,
The swing of yore and tingles to my palm.
Oh! as I leap into thy jaws, O Death!
If the great powers, in the boundless realms,
Of vast eternity, will give my soul,
One glimmering ray of hopeful, holier light,

I'll do, what man or spirit, ever dared,
To trace it to its source.
Steady the rank, there! Ho! my horse!

*[Signals with uplifted glove, and drums
and trumpets heard.]*

Now, let the furies wreak my fate on earth,
Each pit'less stroke shall give fresh valor birth!

SCENE III.

Camp of BRUTUS on the Plains of Philippi. BRUTUS,
DENTATUS, and CIMBER in consultation with At-
tendants.

Brutus. With the foul rumor of this current hour,
The very pith and mettle of our valor
Feels the attrition of our nervous fears.
When had we last, a courier?

Dentatus. A full half-hour since, my general.

Brutus. Cassius is no alarmist in the field.
And therein that he hates suspense, himself,
He doth abridge its stress to others, too.
I fear me much, his tidings are delayed
Until the worst is known.

Cimber. Why here comes Cassius, speeding now,
on foot,
His guard who follow him, are spent and warm,
And cannot keep his pace.

Dentatus. His eyes are steeped with horror and
their glare,
Doth pierce the very air.

Brutus. Alas! that wretched mien exhales
Naught but disaster foul.

Enter CASSIUS.

Cassius. Oh, Brutus, woe to us, for evermore!
All, all is lost.

Brutus. Pray, brother Cassius, sit thee down.

Cassius. Not I!

Fools sit and rot! And I will sit no more!
And from this moment, I will stand, till I
Fall prone, to all eternity!

[*Alarms without. DENTATUS and
CIMBER withdraw.*]

Brutus. Yet, Cassius, thou art rife in martial
work,

To its deserts can fit accordance make.
Were thy troops brave?

Cassius. Brave! Brave, my Brutus?
As the Germanic hordes were, when they whirled,
In waves of dauntless fury, on our front!

Brutus. And how then,
Were we wrought unto this pass?

Cassius. My troops advanced upon the plains
below.

As they sped on, the enemy fell back,

As though they wavered as to where the strife,
Should clash in deadliest rancor,—but when they
Approached the apex of the forest,—then,
Two hundred score of horsemen, there concealed,
Chafing at bit and hand, burst on our right,
Whilst on our front their wavering host had turned,
And fought us inch by inch.

Brutus. Alas! so overcome and overborne,
Thy troops gave way.

Cassius. Not they! they fought in their own tracks,
And perished where they stood.

Brutus. And your reserve when called, could not
retrieve
The fortunes of the day?

Cassius. Our horse
Were unused to the plains. This bred disorder,
And swift, concerted action, which alone
Had saved us, was impossible.

Brutus. And our intrepid Casca, led them, too.

Cassius. Ay and our valiant brother Casca, fell!
His marvellous valor in the strife of arms,
Thrilled all his foemen with admiring awe.
He was unhorsed,—but, fought upon his knees,
And wrenched a sword from one who stabbed him
last.

He fell upon his face,—his foemen turned
Him to the sun,—and when the glow of life
Melted into the ashen hues of death,

The tears of hardy veterans, fell on
His face, like summer rain !

Brutus. Peace to his ashes, then.
He was a Roman of a dauntless heart !
And the majestic courage of his spirit,
Will probe the depths beyond ! nor stoop, nor kneel,
Save but where reverence is due.

Cassius. And Brutus, I have learned
There is grave disaffection 'mid thy troops.
Some emissary of the Cæsar, promised,
Free pardon and full transportation home,
To all who left thy ranks. Thy soldiery,
Are leaving thee in droves, and all is done !

Brutus. These, Cassius, are the base and grovelling dogs,
For whom we reft the hallowed ties of home,
And mired all the pleasures of our state,
In this foul desolation. Oh, my Cassius !
Were there no other world, where man could meet
The due apportionment of his deserts ;
Earth were a sham,—life but a hollow snare,—
And man accurst from birth ! in all this strife,
We've groped the chequered board of fate, not
chance.

I felt my doom as I unsheathed my sword.

Cassius. We have lost all in life ! If taken alive,
We'll lose e'en death as we would have it !

Brutus. I know thy thought. Honor, like all of life,

Hath its extremity,—and there are times,
When patriot hearts can find naught else to do,
But perish with their cause.

Yet, e'er we part,
Forever in this life, I pray you hear
That, which unsaid, might wreak us further ill.
Dear Cassius, I have no reproach for thee!
Be not a coward to thyself, but let
Thy mirrored conscience show the foulest wrong,
That blasted both our lives. When we slew Cæsar,
We wrought a cowardly and dastard act.
A soul-consuming hatred of this man,
Fed by the envies of a narrowed mind;
Nourished by jealousies of place and power,
First led thee to this plot! Against this man,
Thy heart such burden of foul murder bore,
As freighted all the rest. We were all mad.
And in our selfish natures, we mistook
Our petty spleen for patriotic zeal.
Oh, Cassius, Cæsar loved me best on earth!
He, in his spirit came to me, assured
My coward heart of his forgiving love,
And in that act he saved my narrow soul!
His spirit's loving pity smote the walls
Of pride and arrogance, that hemmed me in.
I wrestled with my spirit all the night,
And rose at morn, repentant of this wrong.
Cassius. Oh, my Brutus!

My life is haggard with that very grief.
My nights are filled with horrors,—all my days,
Are steeped in bitterness and wearied woe.
Like one who feels he's growing blind, I dread
The radiant sunshine and the glowing air.
The gleeful cries of children give me pain.
The melody of woman's voice, is naught
But discord to my sense. Beloved, Brutus!
I'd make atonement in a hundred deaths,
To take this sin from off my soul.
I've faced the foe five deep, and fleshed my sword,
Until my sinews cracked with wearying pain.
Then, lain in rest upon the gory field,
Beneath the kindly stars, in peaceful sleep,
As though the angels wooed me to repose.
There was no lying in wait! 'Twas manly strife!
We jeopardized our lives in honor, and
Fought, step by step, on glory's field, to gain
The soldier's fullest meed of fame! but now,
Each noble aspiration of my thought,
The promptings of a kindly, generous mind,
Are crushed and sepulchred,—that demon, fell,
Remorse sits on the stone,—and, day by day,
It grows the weightier; I cannot bear
The agony of this load, and live!

Brutus. Brother, pray to the gods! Repent!
My stricken brother, oh, repent!

Cassius. Repent! But is there time?

Brutus. Time! Time! What is time, unto
The Power that made it? In a moment's space,
Thy highly tempered nature could endure
Anguish enough, to wipe the sins of years,
From off the page of doom!

Cassius. Conviction clinches on each truth you
speak,
And throes of conscience thrill my very soul!

Brutus. Cassius, trust to the gods! Bear this in
mind,—

O! let the blasts of fate pipe as they may,
And spiritual dreamers cavil on,—
There's no place, in the seen, or unseen, world,
Where there's no hope for man! And now, dear
friend,
One last embrace, farewell!

Cassius. So, we must die! While the unheeding
world,
In steady grandeur stems the floods of time,
Unmindful of our petty, fevered lives!
Farewell! O, brother of my heart, farewell.

[*Exit* CASSIUS.]

Brutus. Leonti! Lad, Leonti!

Enter LEONTI.

Leonti. My lord!

Brutus. Take thou this ruby ring! speed to my
home,

Before the night sets in. Give it to Portia!
And tell your mistress that within the hour,
The power of the Cæsar, harms me not!

Leonti. Oh, noble master, I am filled with joy!
And I will sit me in the casement window,
That overlooks the valley road—and when,
I see thy shadowed figure on the road,
I'll need no sunlight to descry thy form!
You have been kind to me,—and my poor heart,
Will leap with joy and tell me thou art come!

[BRUTUS *kisses him on the forehead.*

Brutus. Good-by! dear lad,—good-by!

Leonti. Good-by! Good-by!

[*Exit LEONTI.*

Brutus. O, Portia, Portia! in the camp and field,
And in the deadly stir of martial strife,
Thy grief-wrung cry rings ever in my ears;
And in the stillness of the glowing night,
When bliss-fraught whispers of the peace of heaven,
Lull the hot pulse of man,—I hear that cry,
“Brutus! Brutus! Brutus!”
O, ye potential everlasting gods!
Whate'er of sin, her soul may have to shrive,—
Put that on me,—let me full penance pay!
For, as I failed to make her happy here,
Let my atonement work her peace, above.
And O, ye stars!
Ye stars, whose spherul evolutions ring

In chimes unceasing to the throne of heaven!
As you illumine my shrinking spirit's flight,
Peal forth my prayer for her! e'en while you chant
In solemn conclave, for the souls of men!
Cæsar, thou'rt with me now! I feel, I know it!
I know the burden of thy ditty now!
Thy chant unto the fear-struck ear of night,—
"I'll meet thee again at Philippi!"
And Portia, when thy spirit flees the earth,—
If my deservings, be not such, that heaven
May pair us in one common fate, I pray
I may but see thee once, among the blest!
Now bidding phantom, in a moment hence,
I'll speed in space, with thee! So, farewell earth.
O, sin and sorrow burdened life, farewell,
And heaven receive my spirit!

[Stabs himself and dies.]

Enter ANTONY *and* OCTAVIUS CÆSAR *with* Attendants.

Antony. Alas! Alas!

The valiant Cassius falls not then, alone,
By his own hand,—but noble Brutus too.
No subtleties of selfish humor, led
The manly Brutus, to the work he wrought;
But his mistaken sense of duty, reared
A rainbow fabric of a cause, without
One cloud of reason, or, substantial thought.

Octavius. So, in the chances of our life, oft fall
The noblest, purest, bravest and the best!
Peace to thee, Brutus! Cæsar's love for thee,
Was to us as a sacred legacy.
The highest honors and respect of Rome,
Shall cheer and solace Portia through her life.
Now, bear his body hence, and to it pay
Such rites of sepulture as might become
A brother of the Cæsár.
And oh, my loving friends, how blessed are we,
Who from the sins of erring men, can learn
To better our weak natures, and thus make
Our lives more virtuous, and the world more pure!

THE END.

